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GLASS HOUSES
TEN YEARS OF FREE-LANCING



 BY CARLETON BEALS

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE AND TRAVEL

GLASS HOUSES: TEN YEARS OF FREE-LANCING
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THE STORY OF HUEY P. LONG
PORFIRIO DIAZ: DICTATOR OF MEXICO

GLASS HOUSES

TEN YEARS OF FREE-LANCING

BY
CARLETON BEALS



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CONTENTS

I	DOWN AND OUT	9
II	WHEN IT IS BLESSED TO BE DEAF	19
III	DIMPLES ON THE KNEE	27
IV	TSARIST JEWELS IN HAITI	43
V	REVOLUTION	54
VI	DEATH IN THE HILLS	65
VII	SUICIDE IN NOTRE DAME	72
VIII	CASTLES IN SPAIN	79
IX	ALFONSO AT COURT	88
X	OIL AND WINE	96
XI	ITALY	103
XII	SPRING OF BEAUTY	111
XIII	ARISTOCRATS	120
XIV	DANTE TO PAPINI	131
XV	GOMBO	138
XVI	THE MARCH ON ROME	150
XVII	THE MAN WITH THE BIG JAW	159
XVIII	NEWS ON THE PINCIO	165
XIX	PLUMED SERPENT	174
XX	MURDER IN THE CAPITAL	190
XXI	BANDITS IN AMECAMECA	198
XXII	SERENADE OF DEATH	206
XXIII	MY OWN, MY NATIVE LAND	224
XXIV	DON'T TELL YOUR WIFE	236
XXV	FINIT CORONAT OPUS	250
XXVI	FAKE DOCUMENTS	257

XXVII	MORROW COMES TO MEXICO
XXVIII	MORE OF MORROW
XXIX	SANDINO
XXX	RUSSIAN RIFLES
XXXI	THE END OF MORROW
XXXII	LINDBERGH LOST
XXXIII	LINDBERGH REACHES VALBUENA
XXXIV	MEXICANS NUMBER THEIR VOLCANOES
XXXV	MEXICO THROWS OUT THE BOLSHEVIKS
XXXVI	MURDER FOR JESUS
XXXVII	VALLE-INCLAN
XXXVIII	THEIR BLOOD CRIES OUT
	INDEX

GLASS HOUSES
TEN YEARS OF FREE-LANCING



DOWN AND OUT

NEARLY TWENTY YEARS AGO, I landed in Mexico City off a freight train, exactly fifteen centavos in my pocket.

I was clad in a pair of torn khaki pants, a dirty shirt, and a broken straw sombrero. My sockless feet were rubbed sore from the straps of a pair of Indian sandals which I had made myself, and I carried a rolled-up blanket full of holes from having caught fire one freezing night when I was sleeping in the high sierra.

I knew no one in Mexico City and had only a smattering of Spanish picked up by ear while bumming penniless fifteen hundred miles across the country.

For an entire day before my arrival, I had been standing in one end of a car of stinking pigs and kicking the ugly animals—God's creatures—away from me; but now, as I walked through the tangle of freight-yard tracks toward the glow of the city, I felt that things could never get worse, that a goal had been reached, and that the City of Palaces, as the capital is called, would not only permit me to rebuild a life in ruins but in time would yield fame and fortune.

Invisible assets consisted of youth, a good physique, two university degrees, one of them *cum laude*, and—as in the story-books—a will to get somewhere.

From an Indian woman squatting in the gutter before a corner saloon—I still remember the tint of its peeling pale blue

calcimine—I bought five centavos' worth of cow intestines rolled up in a corn tortilla—my first food in nearly two days.

2

Months before, I had thrown up a job punching an adding machine in the export department of the Standard Oil Company of California, and had started out in a secondhand Ford through California and Arizona deserts. From Wenden, Arizona, which I finally reached on three tires and a rim, I outfitted with burros across the barren reaches toward the Gulf of Lower California.

My strange trip was the result of youthful rebellion—which need not be described here—which had brought me, aside from spiritual satisfaction, mostly despair. My trip was also born of a hatred of the humdrum, the stupidly conventional, of a refusal to be merely a cog in a large industrial organization, my security dependent upon the whims of superiors. Involved, too, was that peculiar impulse which all my life has led me to reject easy solutions and try my powers in unusual situations—as though life at best is not complicated enough.

The trip I describe here for the time being quite satisfied my fullest dislike of ease. Back there in the almost trackless "Burnt-in-the-Middle" country, toward the Mexican border, I almost left my bones. Once I was reduced to lapping water out of a dirty cow-hole. For weeks I wandered through the naked desert under that blaze of sky, dazzled by the incessant sun, lost under the vast silence of night stars in a world of lonesome horizons, and, toward the end, drenched by titanic lightning tempests and downpours. Often at night I lay steaming in wet blankets, clothes soaked to the skin, to wake chilled when the last gleam of the morning star died in violet dawns, coyotes wailing in far hills.

For two days on that desert I lay in the scant shade of a

scrubby false pepper tree, my leg swollen double from a poisonous bite.

Now and then tree mice would sleep against my jugular vein for warmth; and, with faint, unwashed disgust in the false light of dawn, I would shake the loathsome, squidgy, black millipede worms out of my shoes and go on.

The day would burst hot, stale with the sun and tuned with the lonely call of the mourning doves, the dry rattle of reptiles and the hiss of Gila monsters; the jack rabbits would bound by like the wind.

At noon there were mirages of snake-like blue; and they seemed a symbol of broken and meaningless faiths through which one struggled, not without hope, toward an imaginary freedom beyond the haze of a far country that could not all be the same barren onward plodding.

At last the town of Altar spread its flat colored roofs in faint broken strokes beneath a fringe of palms on the banks of a tiny, last river. Finally came the dreary station towns, and at last Hermosillo, the picturesque capital of Sonora, quaintly clustering about a lone limestone butte in sands hotter and more desolate.

There I went broke and jungled out by the river, where the red-necked buzzards cover a hundred branches with white droppings. Desperate, I bummed a train on south, was kicked off at the town of Cajeme, at that time a cluster of thatched mud huts in the empty llano of the Yaqui River valley. The Yaqui Indians thereabouts were on a bloodthirsty warpath.

On a rice plantation near the Gulf of Lower California, I pulled weeds out of an irrigation ditch, standing in water so hot from the blazing sun that I could hardly lie down at night for my blistered skin, unable to sleep properly even if the millions of mosquitoes had been charitable.

My boss beat me out of my miserable fifty centavos per

diem wages, and for a day and a half I walked the thirty miles back to Cajeme through a yellow flood, swirling with washed-up snakes and centipedes, the water mostly to my waist. The night I spent on a mosquito-infested bank so narrow my feet hung in the flood waters.

In Cajeme I helped build a thatched Indian hut—wages seventy-five centavos a day—and sidestepped serious entanglement with the sallow, flat-chested daughter of the Indian commandant.

I bummed a train on south, was kicked off five times, and finally found myself walking the tracks through the lush semi-jungles of upper Sinaloa.

By then my shoe soles were worn through and many a cactus thorn punctured my feet. In Culiacán, I made a pair of Indian guaraches out of a piece of discarded leather begged from a tannery and with wire pried from a fence.

My way next led up through the high sierra along the Tamazula River, which I had to ford over a hundred times. In an Indian shack in the abandoned mining town of Tapia, high in the mountains, I got the flu; so did my hosts. After helping to bury some of them, still just convalescing myself, I accompanied an Indian mail-carrier across the high peaks of the plateau, doing a stretch that ordinarily required a week, in three days, mostly on the dead run—days that stretched from three in the morning, when it would get too freezing cold to sleep any longer, until late at night—often along precipices in the pitchy dark. Great purple and rose dawns burst over imperial heights and gigantic abysses. In one Tepchuane Indian cabin, I drank milk out of the same jarro as did four flu and typhoid patients.

Getting lost in the snow without matches or even a coat, once I gave myself up as carrion for the wolves, but after descending a great ravine without a trail finally found a refuge.

The next night I tumbled into a little flat-roofed adobe pueblo at the foot of the divide, just in time to get caught in a fight between Villista rebels and federal troops. The night following, the soldiers of both sides galloped up and down the town gloriously drunk, shooting at the stars and shouting, "Kill the gringos." To the best of my knowledge I was the only "gringo" in five hundred miles.

From Tepichuane I rode to Durango in the steel convoy car with soldiers, the leg of a machine-gun for my pillow. After weird experiences in Durango, where a Herr Groeschen assisted me, I went on south in the caboose of a freight train and finally, after innumerable adventures, reached Mexico City—in a car of pigs.

3

— Though unable to repay them directly, I shall always be grateful to the kind, humble folk who befriended a strange, dilapidated foreigner who passed among them and never returned: the poor people who gave of their scanty store of food, the rancher who made me stay at his house for several days to rest up, the Indian girl who brought me meals when I was in jail in Querobabi, the railway workers who saved me from being eaten by crocodiles, the good folk who protected me when I was ill.

I shall always be grateful to the good German Frau in Aguas Calientes. I needed medical care and boldly went to the first foreign doctor I found—a German. At sight of my rags, thinking perhaps I had come to beg, he flew into a rage and shouted "*Schweinerei heraus!*" and drove me out. But in the flower-filled outer patio his wife, sorrow in her eyes, whispered in my ear to come back in the afternoon when she would be alone.

A trained nurse, she cauterized the ulcers on my feet and legs with a hot instrument, bound up the wounds and gave me food, towel, soap and medicine to carry along with me.

I shall always be grateful to Juan de Dios Avellaneda, the Congressman who befriended me in Mexico City. The second day there, I stopped him on the street to ask him in broken Spanish for an address. He leaned on his gold-headed cane, one hand on his white waistcoat, and replied in perfect English.

During seven years as a roustabout worker in the United States, he had suffered hunger and abuse; few had befriended him. Instead of being rancorous toward Americans, he now assisted me. After his harsh experiences in my own country he believed that his nation owed double hospitality to the strangers in its midst.

Now he took me to the marble halls of the Chamber of Deputies, introduced me to a colleague, then led me to his home, gave me a bath, underwear, a shirt, a suit of clothes. He sat me down at his table to eat and sent me away with a peso and letters of introduction. What American Congressman—indeed, what American—I asked myself, would do the same for a homeless foreigner?

I shall always be grateful to the woman of the shabby boarding house who gave me food and lodging for three months on credit and let me pay half of it by teaching her two children English. Very appropriately that boarding house was located on Dolores Street—the Street of Sorrows—which runs from the Alameda to the San Juan market, a bustling little thoroughfare with stalls heaped high with fruit and vegetables and calicoes, a street of poor folk who take their sorrows philosophically and often gaily.

4

Strange but providential things had happened to me almost as soon as I stepped foot in Mexico City. I had hardly walked half a dozen blocks when I was given a lift in an elegant European car by the chauffeur of whom I had asked the way to the center of town.

He dumped me down in front of the German Club, where a formal dance was going on and people in evening clothes were stepping out of limousines. I stood dazed under the bright lights, my ragged blanket on my back, my broken straw hat on my nose.

Someone exploded "*Donnervetter!*" and grasped me by the arm. The stranger led me off to feed me a mammoth meal which I could scarcely touch—one cannot readily change one's eating habits—and got me a room in the servants' quarters on the roof of the Hotel Tacuba.

I slept various places the next few nights and lived for quite a while on five centavos' worth of peanuts and five centavos' worth of bananas a day. Once, my money gone, I stole a roll of bread out of the basket of a sleeping vender.

I am not ashamed to confess this, except that I stole it from someone nearly as poor as myself. The plump judges who give starving men harsh sentences for having stolen food for themselves or their families are the real criminals before the bar of justice. How much better was the ancient Incas law that if any person was caught stealing food, the local representative of the Emperor was imprisoned for allowing anyone in his district to be hungry.

For about a week I slept in the apartment of Lawrence Saylor, the editor of a maverick English magazine. A pallid, red-bearded man, a queer refugee from the United States, he made a living giving spiritualist séances and curing by the laying on of hypnotic hands. For a few days I tried soliciting advertising for his magazine, but what with it not being an important medium—perhaps because of its advocacy of everything from the Socialist commonwealth to eating raw carrots—and the drawback of my poor Spanish, I got no results except sore feet. At any rate I had made some feeble effort to repay Saylor's hospitality.

One night in his house a rat, to get at a few peanuts in the lining of my suit, which Avellaneda had just given me, gnawed a hole right in the front of the coat. It was many a day before I could get it patched, and then the damage showed badly.

In the Alameda, that central sunny park of Mexico, with its languid trees and bronze and marble statues and balmy sunlight, where one could rest off one's discouragement, I fell—quite by accident—into conversation with Harold Brochman, a serious, bespectacled, fastidious chap who had formerly worked on the *Chicago Tribune*. He had about a hundred pesos capital and was looking for a way to make a living. With Martin Paley, a former New York City school teacher, we formed a partnership, and Jacob's hundred pesos enabled us to rent a large office, have a table and blackboard made, buy some chairs, get a big sign painted and advertise in the papers. Thus was founded "The English Institute." By putting nearly everything back into advertising, in about four months we were making a modest living out of the place.

Presently I ran into an old college friend, an electrical engineer for Westinghouse, and through his recommendation got a job teaching in the American High School, of which I was soon made the head.

Shortly after this I was asked to teach military English to members of President Venustiano Carranza's staff.

Soon, also, I was invited to give a Shakespeare lecture once a week to the good women of the American colony seeking culture.

I had reached Mexico City as a homeless outcast. In less than a year I was earning more than I ever had.

As soon as my immediate financial worries were solved I turned to writing. Ever since I can remember that has been

my one ambition. Now, for the first time in my life, though I had made earlier tentative attempts, I set to work in earnest. Perhaps for the first time I felt that I really had something I was anxious to say, whatever the obstacles. Experiences had crowded in upon me. A philosophy was shaping itself out of my callow adolescence.

In a life more changeful, colorful and disorderly than most, everything, in a sense, has contributed to that one aim—to write, the shakeless pivot of my life; and if in nothing else have I ever been particularly disciplined, with regard to writing, ever since those early attempts in Mexico, I have been a model of Prussian rigor and daily persistence.

For a time I had the idea I must first make money in order to have the proper leisure to write. With that idea I spent my first year in college studying mining engineering. But soon enough I realized that one must write whatever happens to one, whether one has food or not, whether one is standing on his feet or on his head. For even if one has talent, to learn to write well is a long, grueling process. Life is too short to waste much time merely getting ready to write.

In the long trip across the desert and the mountains, mostly penniless, I kept a little notebook with me. It gathered the sweat of my body, grew damp around the edges when I had to sleep out in the driving rain, grew grimy with the fine powder of desert storms. It is precious to me.

Moments stand out. Sitting by a little water hole in the Sonora desert on a still, hot day, only the melancholy call of the mourning doves breaking the deep silence, there staring across the empty reach of heat-dancing sand and red, jagged buttes, I whiled away the tedium by jotting down notes. To this day I can still feel a terrible nostalgia for the majestic loneliness and the mingled peace and terror of the desert, those

flickering fires in Indian huts in the walled-in canyons of the Tamazula River.

Now, during those days in Mexico City, despite my new and multiple occupations, I kept my typewriter busy. Up at six in the morning, a cup of coffee beside my machine, I would set to work out on the terrace of the apartment I had rented in a tall red brick building on Ayuntamiento Street. By eight-fifteen I had to be at the American School, which lasted until one. In the afternoon I tutored, taught at the Institute, did some more writing; at night I taught some more at the Institute and up at the War Department in the National Palace. Once a week I gave my Shakespeare lecture.

Whatever recreation I had—and in those youthful days it was frequently pretty wild—came after a fifteen-hour day of work.

6

Those were exciting times in Mexico—days of revolution and trouble—and I was an eyewitness to some stirring events.

WHEN IT IS BLESSED TO BE DEAF

MEXICO, TWENTY YEARS AGO, though order was emerging after nearly two decades of revolutionary upheaval, was still a war-torn country. An organized federal army was beginning to dominate the wild chieftains who had harried the land from end to end; social reforms were beginning to quiet the population; but even so, Villa was still rampant in the north. On my trip south, besides the fight in the village beyond Tepehuane, Villista rebels had attacked the freight train on which I had ridden across the barren Durango and Chihuahua plains; in many places the right of way was strewn with the twisted ruins of burnt trains.

From Mexico City itself I could see the watch fires of the agrarian rebel Emiliano Zapata blazing brightly in lofty Milpa Verde. The picturesque Desierto de Los Leones, only an hour or so out from the capital, was still Zapata country. I went there once with a special detachment of federal soldiers. Elongated wind-dried human cadavers, hung from trees or telegraph poles, turned slowly in the breeze. I went over the old road to Cuernavaca. No traveler's life was safe. Many more cadavers dangled by the roadside—macabre weather-vanes of civil war.

Mexico City itself was wild, with a murderous night-life. Prostitutes—unfortunate women washed up by the disorder—swarmed everywhere. I counted forty-seven street-walkers in one block right by the main post-office, a street not particularly devoted to this activity. There were four vast red-light districts—not to mention the scores of houses of every category scat-

tered over the city, or the wild dance-hall saloons all the way from the center out through the Peravillo and Guerrero districts. Sometimes women came to bachelor doors and for small sums offered their twelve- or thirteen-year-old daughters "to work" for a week or so. As wreckage drifted in from the European war, more sophisticated talent of the Old World capitals competed with the charms of native women. Wide-open gambling flourished.

Generals, drunk with sudden power, splattered their ill-gotten wealth around recklessly, shot up cafés, even looted homes. One foreigner traced his lost automobile to a general. The police were afraid to act. The foreigner went to President Carranza. The President spread out his hands helplessly and paid the price of the car out of the public treasury rather than offend a powerful militarist.

There was the smelly scandal of the Gray Automobile—a series of sensational robberies of wealthy homes by a band that always used a gray touring car. A woman, robbed, identified her pearl necklace being worn by María Conesa, one of Mexico's leading vaudeville actresses. It had been given to her by a prominent general.

The robberies had been carried out at the behest of several higher-up revolutionary generals who had social access to the homes robbed. Eight or nine arrests of minor participants were made.

Two implicated generals hurriedly left on official missions abroad, paid by the government to hide themselves and their crimes away. One by one the minor participants were done away with. One committed "suicide" in his cell; two others killed each other in a "brawl," another died of "sickness." All the human "evidence" was obliterated, the malodorous trail of the war lords covered up.

María Conesa became mixed up in various other scandals,

finally became the mistress, later the wife, of General Alvarez, aide of President Calles himself. Soon he forged the President's name to smuggle in silks and was removed from the army in disgrace and sentenced to prison.

2

Trouble those days might start unexpectedly even in the most respectable restaurants. Several times bullets spattered around when I was present. An Englishman was shot down in a central hotel when he declined a drink offered him by a general he didn't know.

Ill-feeling against Americans was particularly strong—a hold-over from the Pershing and Vera Cruz expeditions and Mexico's resultant pro-German attitude during the World War. Once I fought my way out of a central business bar, a wooden stool in hand.

One night I was dining in the Principal Café. Near by, a general, inspired by bravura and brandy, to show off before his hilariously drunk companions, jumped on the table, pistol in hand, and yelled: "Everyone has exactly five minutes to clear out."

A surprised hush fell. Then chairs were hurriedly pushed back. Couples rushed out. The waiters snatched up their trays and ducked.

I reasoned: "I have five minutes," so I kept on twining my spaghetti about my fork.

In a trice, I was the only person—except the general's own crowd—left in the place. Panic struck me. If I go out now, I thought, the general may take a pot shot at me.

Down a long passageway, I could see a waiter frantically waving his serving-cloth at me to get out. My fork clattered against my plate and my teeth. My knees were knocking together under the table. But I kept on eating.

Again the general jumped on the table and yelled: "Half a minute more."

Then I knew I was safe. He had yelled his warning at the door instead of directly at me.

Watch in hand, the general strode over and thrust his pistol into my ribs, and then I was quite sure any reasonable explanation would save me.

"I told you to get out," bellowed the general.

I cupped my ear with my hand, as though hard of hearing. "What you say, general?" I yelled back.

The general stared at me in astonishment. A grin spread over his swarthy features. Clapping me jovially on the shoulder, he said, "You sonnabich, you're no more deaf than I am. Come on over and have a drink with us."

When calm returned and the waiter finally presented a large bill, the general tossed the metal tip-tray into the air, shot it full of holes and stalked out with his gang without paying.

3

I met President Carranza himself: a big, white-bearded man behind blue spectacles—a calm iceberg of a man, beyond enthusiasm. His frigid utterance was an outward manifestation of an obstinacy as unshakable as a granite mountain. Despite the gang of cutthroat generals around him—most of whom I knew personally—he himself was strictly honest. A well-to-do rancher, a Porfirio Díaz politician, he was a reactionary who, by personal ambition and chance, had become head of a vast revolutionary movement with which he did not really sympathize. He looked at the revolution he had helped to make through blue spectacles. Lincoln Steffens' interpretation of Carranza as a real revolutionary is cock-eyed.

Carranza's obstinacy gradually drove from his side the more capable and honorable generals; he kept as intimates the crooks

and bootlickers, those willing to take orders unquestioningly in return for a chance to graft and have power. I met most of them in the course of my work at the Palace: Barragán, Urbalejo, Mariel Diéguez, Pablo González (who assassinated Zapata), and others.

Carranza, to the end of his life limitless in his appetite for women, would take on as many as five different ones a day. General Juan Barragán had been a procurer for him—to that he owed his promotion—and was rewarded, at the age of twenty-six, with the Ministry of War. A cocky youngster, he used to race his sporting car through the streets like a bat out of hell, his feet stuck up arrogantly on the windshield.

If this wild breed, let loose on Mexico, swept the country clean like a swarm of locusts, they also devoured each other. Looking over Obregón's memoirs, *Eight Thousand Kilometers of Campaigning*, I find that in less than ten years practically every person of any importance mentioned therein—except himself and Calles—had been killed in battle, assassinated, executed, or driven out of the country. And since then Obregón himself has been assassinated, Calles deported.

The Mexican army, even in independence days, was "conceived in treason" and "suckled on theft," and the price of "liberty" gained by such hands was high for the nation and "liberty" precarious indeed.

But despite the disorder, the cruelties and abuses, a people, long blind and enslaved, had awakened; and Mexico, like a torrent no man may stay, was sweeping toward a new destiny. Most critics of Mexico at that time saw merely the scum in the eddies of the torrent, but did not see the torrent, and would not have understood its meaning even if they had seen it. Out of it all eventually came a much better Mexico.

4

But in those days even civil institutions were still the prey of violent elements. Elections were bloody farces. Congress itself was far from peaceful. Insulting debates frequently resulted in shooting affrays that clipped the marble of the balustrades. At every new session, for every seat, three or four claimants invariably presented themselves. One aspirant presented his credentials with a strong arm gang and a leveled machine-gun. He got the seat.

A friend of mine, battling for a seat, was getting nowhere.

"They haven't even bothered," he wailed to me, "either out in the state or here, to open the ballot-boxes and count the vote. I'm trying to force them to. I ask only for justice. But my opponent has a big pull."

Several weeks later I saw him again. He was beaming. "I got the seat! I paid L— [a certain pseudo labor leader with a government job] five thousand pesos."

"So they counted the ballots?"

"Naw. Good thing they didn't; I didn't have majority anyway." He laughed heartily.

My friend and savior, Avellaneda, had his own shooting scrape. Often he had told me of his adventures in the revolution and the number of persons he had put under the sod. One day I accused him of having a private graveyard. This time, though, he almost visited someone else's graveyard—but not because of affairs of state.

In faded ink, in a battered folder, I find:

"This morning I visited my friend, Deputy Avellaneda, in the Red Cross Hospital. He is lying there with a broken shoulder, which he obtained by being shot twice—over a girl—54 Tacuba Street.

"The Red Cross Hospital is an old dilapidated building, di-

vided into huge wards. Avellaneda, in one of these, screens about his bed, lies on his back, his face sallow and distorted with constant pain from the heavy weights that hang by the side of his bed from pulleys. An Indian nurse squats by the side of his bed, smoking black cigarettes."

Typical of those times of easy-come-easy-go money was my friend, Congressman Agustín Solís. It took a good physique to spend much money. The only currency was heavy silver and the main commodity was booze. To carry even twenty pesos weighted one down and was hard on clothes. My Japanese tailor used to put new pockets in my trousers every two months, for I kept my pesos a bit longer than did Solís.

Every ten days, when he received his pay as representative of the land, he would appear in my apartment with a big bag of silver over his shoulder and invite me forth. Miraculously he would collect a swarm of friends and head for the favorite bar. A round of drinks, then Solís would unloosen the mouth of the sack and let the silver pesos spout out on the mahogany.

The ritual would be repeated in bar after bar. Solís always kept on going until he and his increasing entourage had put all the silver pesos down the hatch.

5

Jack Johnson, the negro heavyweight champion, become a prominent figure in Mexico, was scheduled to face barehanded a bull in the ring. Some days later I asked how it had gone.

He wrinkled up his brow, rolled his eyes and boomed, "Ah sure wuz scared. Ah'd rather fight a hundred men than one bull any day."

Johnson was exceedingly popular. A group of fast generals had taken him up and idolized him. They used to hang out in the old El Globo café on the corner of Madero and Bolívar.

One day Jack went alone into Bradcock's, a very fashionable restaurant run by an American Southerner.

Jack had been told that there was no color line in Mexico, but in Bradcock's restaurant, after a long wait on his part, a waitress informed him she had orders never to serve a negro.

He went over to El Globo. Two generals at once insisted on returning with him to Bradcock's. The three of them seated themselves at a table and asked to see Bradcock personally.

Bradcock appeared, rubbing his hands ingratiatingly as though about to present someone with a loving-cup.

"What can we do for you?" he asked solicitously, noticing the insignia on the uniforms.

"We want four coffees."

"Certainly, certainly." One was never impolite to a Mexican general. "You have another friend coming?"

"No," snorted one of the generals. "We are asking you to do us the honor of taking coffee with us." He laid his gun on the table.

Mr. Bradcock, proud Southerner that he was, tamely sat down.

Afterwards the generals called a policeman, and Bradcock was fined a hundred pesos for discrimination.

When a group of us told Jack we were trying to raise money to publish a paper to air some of our maverick notions about the world, immediately he peeled off a twenty dollar bill. He would never deny a friend or acquaintance anything.

6

And not least of those days, perhaps, was María María, aglow under her sleazy black lace, with her absurd bow garters, her pout of puckered lips, her glad little chirps of surprise.

DIMPLES ON THE KNEE

THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION HAD not only its own flotsam of shattered lives, but the World War, which had flung broken lives all around the globe, had sent its full quota to the local collection. The markets and streets were full of Jewish peddlers from Middle Europe, selling neckties, socks, hardware and other commodities. One poor fellow peddled bright-colored prints of the Christian Virgin of Guadalupe. "Buy a Virgin for one peso," he would cry, then mumble a Yiddish curse. Most of such exiles soon improved their lot.

The three young Kamerinsky brothers, Russian Jews, had been wealthy textile manufacturers in Belgium. The German drive had smashed their factories; but pacifists, rather than fight, they had emigrated to the United States to start business anew. Later, reciprocal conscription of allied citizens forced them to flee to Mexico, their fortune gone. After much contriving, they started a small shoddy factory and in a few years became millionaires.

Helpful to all poor Jewish immigrants, they came into conflict with the Russian consul, a Tsarist appointee, who still improperly acted as the official representative of his country. Many immigrants, having landed in Mexico with fake papers or being in other difficulties, came to him. Learning their story, he would betray them by getting corrupt officials to throw them into jail. Then he would make them pay through the nose. It was thus he earned his living.

Exasperated, George Kamerinsky exposed his activities, even bought advertising space to attack him. The consul had Kamerinsky himself thrown into jail, along with three Polish Jews.

Kamerinsky's wife came running over to my apartment on Ayuntamiento to ask me to do something.

I went up to see Minister of Foreign Affairs, Manuel Berlanga, and told him the whole story. George and the three immigrants were out late that afternoon. Berlanga withdrew recognition of the Tsarist consul.

Henry Church, an American pacifist, had landed in Mexico without shoestrings. He made a meager living selling silk stockings and flashlights. Gradually he built up an established business, and in a few years started a women's garment factory and became wealthy. He had queer crotchets: ate only raw food, cabbage, carrots and fruits, and dreamed of the day when he would spend the rest of his life running naked in the sun of a tropical island and reading all the books he longed to read. The date for his retirement was always set two years hence, but he is still making money, eating raw cabbages and dreaming of freedom.

David Carson, born naturalist, was collecting snakes, lizards and similar reptiles for an American museum. Several times when I was quietly conversing in his apartment, a snake came looping across the floor.

"Jesus, I forgot to put him away!" David would exclaim.

"Is it poisonous?"

"Not very. . . ."

Dressed like a native in white cotton "pajamas" and sandals, David made long trips through the hot country, without ever taking any of the explorer's usual precautions. Once an insect

laid its larva in his hip, and he returned with an ulcer big enough to put your fist into. He merely laughed at such contretemps.

Once he left a suitcase with three big rattlesnakes inside it in the care of a small innkeeper in Jalisco. The innkeeper opened the suitcase.

When David returned, he found the inn completely abandoned, two snakes in undisputed possession. The third had disappeared.

David had been a member of the Montana National Guard, but when it was mobilized during the War, he didn't report because he was under draft age and his discharge was almost due. He was arrested and held in a border guardhouse near El Paso.

He was told he would be released as soon as his discharge came through, but red tape unwound slowly. Months passed. Impatient, David decided to take French leave.

One evening he and another prisoner were taken by a guard out on the front porch, full of soldiers lounging on cots. The two prisoners made a concerted dash for freedom.

They bolted across the street under a bright arc lamp. To David that interval seemed an eternity. Why didn't they shoot? Why didn't—

Soon enough, bullets were skipping around their heels. They ducked behind a shed, cut across a field right under the windows of the main barracks and climbed through a barbed wire fence.

The other chap went to see his sweetheart, who at once turned him back to the authorities and pocketed the reward. David went down to the river bank by the international railway bridge.

Though there was not a shrub to shield him from the bright moonlight, inch by inch David wormed along the sand to the

piers of the well-guarded bridge. Sentries were posted at the inland approach; another sentry, silhouetted against the sky, gun on his shoulder, paced to the middle of the span and back again. When the sentry walked toward Mexico, David crawled a few feet nearer. When the sentry turned to walk toward the United States, David lay flat on his belly.

Getting to the bridge, he climbed up to a girder and walked across to the Mexican side. He could have reached up and seized the sentry's foot.

His discharge came through several days after he had risked his life escaping.

Lawrence Saylor, editor of a magazine, at whose home I stayed for a short time, landed in Mexico penniless, but soon was elegantly dressed in cutaway and striped trousers; his big red beard swept a white waistcoat; and he put on an especially grand air for his spiritualist séances and touch-of-hand curing. He was an odd creature, his blue eyes singularly vacant and uneasy; his tiny rattly laugh, as constantly he drew his trembling pale fingers down his pasty face, was utterly humorless. He had an insane intensity that accorded with his apparent occultism. In his magazine he advocated reformed spelling, free love, vegetarianism, nudism, and every eccentricity. He made some ready cash by selling for a dollar a copy a paper-back translation of Margaret Sanger's pamphlet on birth-control methods.

He had started life as a printer's devil, then as a reporter, finally had become the editor of a town paper. Candidate for mayor, he shadowed his opponent into a red-light district and set up the forms for a terrific exposé. His opponent sent a messenger with \$5,000 to buy him off, but the messenger arrived too late, a fact Saylor seemed to have regretted ever after, especially as he wasn't elected.

Getting into some scrape, he was given his choice of serving time or joining the army. He chose the latter, then fled to Mexico—he and his wife wading across the Rio Grande.

Subsequently he went back to the United States, had a great deal of trouble there. The last I heard he was running a bookstore in Seattle.

Mexico, when I first landed there at the end of 1918, was a museum of such odd types.

2

A rough-neck group used to eat at Fat Sing's little hole-in-the-wall restaurant on Dolores Street. After the Emily Postness of the good ladies over their tea at my Shakespeare lectures, I found it a relief to gang up there.

Among the Fat Singers was George Wakefield, an engineer who wanted to paint.

One evening we were sitting there with George, several newspaper men, and a young oil man from Tampico who was gaining nightly favors from the pretty waitress on the promise—which he had no intention of keeping—of taking her back to Tampico with him. We had just ordered beefsteaks when George suddenly rushed out, saying he would be right back.

The beefsteaks came. We waited, then ate. Still George did not return. We finished our coffee. His steak was stone-cold.

Presently he came rushing back, wrathful. "Got arrested!" he growled.

Having utilized a dark market stall for a purpose it was never intended, he had been taken down to the nearest precinct station. After producing his newspaper card, he finally persuaded the desk sergeant to let him off with only a lecturing.

Wakefield, having refused to go to war, had served a year in jail in New York, then fled to Mexico. After varied mis-haps, he went broke in Mazatlán on the west coast, where for

a time he ran a pineapple drink stand. Later he taught on an hacienda in Jalisco for his keep.

He was constantly quoting poetry at great length,—especially after a few drinks—his favorite being *Dover Beach*. Often, too, he would read to us out of his journal, particularly his rapturous descriptions of his wife Blanche, with whom he was desperately in love, though to whom he was far from faithful. His journal went into detailed descriptions of his most intimate relations with her—he left little to the imagination. We heard all about Blanche's "lovely form, her lovely deer-like legs, the dimple on her knee. . . . She took off her red silk chemise, and her breasts were two suns flooding my life with joy, her hips were . . ." But it is not wise to go further into George's rhapsodizing.

Blanche finally appeared on the scene, a handsome, plump girl with a throaty, musical voice and much quiet depth. Every time I dropped around to their shabby room in the Hotel Nuevo México, Blanche was always sitting around nonchalantly in a red silk chemise—that authenticated at least part of George's diary.

Probably getting over parental inhibitions, George considered it a moral obligation to get drunk whenever he could—it released one's soul. When in due time we gave Blanche a welcoming party, George was at once torn between his obligation to go to a late night job he had and invite his soul by drinking all the rum in sight.

He decided on the rum and kept scolding at Blanche. "You must get drunk tonight. Why don't you let yourself go?"

But Blanche was still sober when he became violently sick and was laid out cold in another room. Someone else tended to his job. Someone else took care of Blanche.

After George passed out, she felt disgusted and reckless.

Walter Heltschmidt, a poet present, sedulously plied her with wine and attention. She became tipsy; they kissed openly.

Heltschmidt, indicted for some anti-war propaganda, had skipped out to Mexico. A big burly fellow, in his shaggy corduroy suit and scarlet tie under his insolent chin, he stumped around with a big knotty cane. The Beau Brummell, artist and beast came to perfect terms in him. Rough and coarse, like a peasant, but with the tricks of refinement, he had a fanatic love for Wagner, knew all the motifs, and to hear him talk about painting or music was a real education. Always sarcastic, but childishly resentful if anyone turned the tables on him, he greatly admired Turner's irascible bad manners. *The Gentle Art of Making Enemies* was his Bible.

He lived by repetitious phrases he thought witty: "I'll cut you off like a wart and throw you in a corner." "One has to compromise to live, otherwise one would have to commit suicide, and that is the biggest compromise of all." He never called people by their right names but with a contemptuous sneer: Doctor, Professor, Princess Kate, Lady Maud, etc.

Though undoubtedly talented, as he held the theory that genius is inspired and need not toil or study, he didn't work much, and his poetry lacked depth and sympathy.

He bragged much and in detail about his amorous conquests. Seduced when a boy by a nurse, he had kept busy ever since. He boasted how he enticed girls from a commercial school above his New York apartment, got them tight, took them once and kicked them out. Once he was best man for the hurried wedding of one girl he had gotten into a family way. His highlight experience was with a manicurist with whom he took perfumed baths, but who always made him sneak out of her bed before daylight.

The day after the party in which George passed out, Blanche went to live with Heltschmidt. George, quite broken up, wept

tears, but, very heroic and self-sacrificing, declared that for marriage to be successful women as well as men should have outside sex experience. Tolerance in such cases indicated real love. Blanche should have her experience with Heltschmidt, not the kind for a lasting affair, then George would generously take her back. A few days later George approached Heltschmidt on the street. The poet turned deathly pale and grasped his cane more tightly.

But George merely asked him tenderly if he needed funds—the poet was having quite a struggle. He loved Blanche too deeply to want her to suffer. Quite nobly, George paid their rent, bought them food.

As for Heltschmidt, he went around saying he couldn't find the dimple on Blanche's knee—of which George had written so ecstatically in his journal—or anywhere else.

Blanche had her sex experience with Heltschmidt, had an abortion in a back room with three witch-like old women performing by candlelight, almost died; then, far from returning to Wakefield, went off with the poet to Europe. It turned out then that he was not so broke as he had made out: he had been sponging off George.

Blanche had a child by Heltschmidt, whereupon, in London, he up and left her for an English actress, very swank and sveldt, but ten years his senior.

He has never done anything worth commenting about with his remarkable artistic talent. It has all been poured down the funnel of laziness, self-pity and a helter-skelter life.

As for George, for a time he threatened to marry a pretty widow ten years older than himself with eight children, but finally married a French girl interested in hats.

Folk such as these were still playing with life in the years of the great break-up. Their exploits were part of the revolt of Bohemia against traditional puritanism and the cultural mo-

notony and intolerance of the American hinterland, part of the story of traditions going to smash everywhere—very definitely symptoms of the passing of an epoch in American life and a symbol of a world in flux. These American Bohemians were not, like Poe or Villon or Baudelaire, driven to vices by inner desperation and terror or even cynicism, so much as by a childish bravura against the smugness of comfortable society. Their bravura smacked slightly of the reformist seriousness of the very Puritans they so despised.

Sexual revolt is always the initial symptom of the decay of an era. It is the easiest experimentalism in an age not yet open to the new ideas about to sweep the minds of men. But it helped release the inhibitions of a whole generation. If most of the earlier Bohemians got lost in the maze of posing rather than in reality and produced only third-rate art or went off into various small radical sects, Greenwich Village in its day was the goal of Youth wishing to live freely and create worthily. In that age of Floyd Dell, Mencken, Max Eastman, John Reed, new forces were stirring. Out of the Village came the *New Masses* and the *New Yorker*, radicalism and sophistication. It was an early symptom of the great break-up.

Now, twenty years later, Bohemianism is scarcely the stuff of revolt at all. It has become commonplace. Hollywood, gangsterdom, high society, politicians, country clubs, Prohibition road houses, flapperdom, have made Bohemianism merely a vulgar banality.

3

Mike Gold, then in Mexico, is a Hungarian Jew using a pseudonym, a product of New York ghettos and of Greenwich Village. A rough-hewn, dark chap, earthy, elemental, brooding but devil-may-care, full of flame-like seriousness lightened by a whimsical sneer, he was liked by everyone for his gipsy nonchalance toward time, tide and food. Through his nature ran

the song of poetry, like a Hungarian melody, but a song that often cracked on harshness. In his hard intensity of emotion and utter disregard of systematized living, he would model exquisite things and just as often crush them and strew them aside.

Mostly terrifically hard up, he never worried about his next meal. I offered to turn some English classes in a commercial school over to him. Sometime later the woman who ran the school upbraided me.

"You promised not to leave until you got someone else."

"I did."

"That man you sent around here! He seemed awful nice, but I simply can't understand the way he acted. Right in the middle of a class he said, 'Aw, to hell with this,' and walked out."

One night Mike and I were standing on a cold corner talking about the need for a new type of literary criticism utilizing not merely an aesthetic or subjective yardstick, but an economic and social yardstick. Mike suggested that it was such an interesting theme, we ought to have a drink of Havanero. I can still remember him in that little bar on López Street, his tousled hair and dark eyes, his rough corduroy trousers and heavy shoes; his poetry, intensity, enthusiasm, and a slight superciliousness toward my lack of knowledge of sin if not of my ideas.

Mike, who later wrote a mediocre Mexican play and that remarkable book, *Jews Without Money*, which hit the best-seller lists, in those days was fluctuating between literature and Marxianism, Bohemia and the class-struggle. It was the early division between those protesting against conventional morality and those interested in social revolt.

Once he remarked, with a hint of youthful intolerance: "People who do not understand Karl Marx must find the world

a very confused place. They have no means of measuring any of life's phenomena."

Probably he needed a doctrinaire prop to feel proper confidence in himself, although his whole being, the poet and artist in him, seemed basically opposed to rigid dogma. The Communist catechism he later so ardently embraced must have partly frozen rather than stimulated his remarkable literary talent. He now finds it a bit hard, I imagine, to set himself to important works, for it is not an enviable position to maintain—that of being *the* literary oracle for world revolution and having your feet constantly laved by the Magdalenes who have suddenly discovered the great proletarian battle.

As I turn to a recent issue of the *New Masses*, I find an article by him on the recurrent theme of ten years past, in which he furiously attacks the intellectuals for their failure to join the Communist Party and ascribes it largely to their petty vanity. This sectarian disk seems a bit worn now—the same clichés, the same arguments, the same blunt lack of finesse, the artist more and more blotted out by the propagandist rehashing set formulae with a Sir Oracle touch. With propagandists per se I have no quarrel; they are a most necessary evil. But it is not necessary to wipe out all functional differentiations even if it should be granted that the world is on the eve of revolution.

4

There were other types of social rebels in Mexico those days. An old-fashioned radical was Harry Hardwick, a Socialist Labor Party man. Hardwick, a funny little bald-headed fellow, from behind his barrier of gold teeth, rhapsodized eternally about Daniel de Leon, the one and only genius who ever lived. If he had ever read anything else, he never revealed the fact. He had the shining assurance of the one-book man.

Larry Sims, the "Wobbly" in our Fat Sing gatherings, used

to kid him unmercifully. After many respectful questions about De Leon, little by little Sims would make them ridiculous, asking Hardwick what toys De Leon played with when a boy, whether he ever wet his pants, etc. Hardwick would fly into a rage and bang off from the rest of us.

He lived in a cheap little room but evidently had funds for he never did anything except read De Leon and the S.L.P. paper and pick up girls off the street. For a time he lived with a woman who had a small daughter and a hole-in-the-wall store. He would put ads in the paper to exchange English for Spanish lessons with young ladies, some of whom, not too dismayed by his gold teeth and bald head, became interested in his super-brand of learning. He never did learn enough Spanish, though, to bore his female finds about the glories of De Leon or he might have had a much less complicated sex-life.

5

Larry Sims, as reckless a dare-devil as ever hit the pike, half criminal, half idealist, had done a lot of rough stuff for the Wobblies out West. One night he told me lengthily of his life.

"I never had much education, and I ain't much when it comes to putting my ideas into words, but my whole life is the Wobbly (I.W.W.) movement. A fellow what ain't been through the mill can't realize all the guts behind the Wobblies. I know the whole game. I know how to fight with the Wobblies, and in a show-down I've always been able to take the lead. I ain't afraid of the big white ghost himself.

"It's because I've lived the whole hell of the goddam system that I know conditions. My father died when I was just a kid. At fourteen I went to work in a box factory, and I've been digging ever since. Now I'm interested only in propaganda. I'm foot-loose. No one to worry about me and no one for me to worry about. Not a goddam relative. A few days on this

job, a few days on that job, and I get a chance to talk to the workers. They listen to me because I sling their lingo. If they don't listen, we put the fear of God into them; we make them more afraid of the Wobblies than the man in blue with the big gat. Then we talk to 'em again.

"Maybe you don't believe in them tactics. I do. I know what the other side does, what it can do. My head has been ripped full of scars. At Wheatfield, California, twelve of us held off two hundred vigilantes with Winchesters and machine-guns. In the Sacramento jail, just for being hunger-marchers, they turned the fire-hose on us—the louses! We got our mattresses up against the bars and saved ourselves—that's the only way. But a few poor saps, green to the game, got pounded to jelly. One got his nose ripped off. That's the deal you get from the law in this lousy land of the free.

"I've been in every big strike and every big free-speech fight in this country: San Diego, Portland, all over the lot; and I tell you, you have to scare the other side, and you have to scare the dirty wage-slave who sells his labor cheaper than a whore. I'm thirty years old now, no spring chicken, and with all the knocks I've got I've grown bitter. You've got to do things the tough way. What are you going to do with a lousy farmer who has promised you \$3.50 a day and takes advantage of your poverty to pay you off at \$2.50. You ain't protected. You can't go to law about it. But don't you think if his haystack burns down, he'll be a little careful? Don't you think that if a railroad 'brakie' gets a kick in the jaw that knocks his front teeth right down his scissor-bill throat, he'll go slow about pitching men off a moving freight? You gotta use such methods. You're lyin' in a box-car and along comes a brakie.

" 'Get to hell out of here,' he yells at you.

"You just wait, and if he leans over to get rough, you let

him have it with your two feet right smack in the mug. Then you drop off at the next grade. Get me?

"Every guy that rides a brake-beam these days gotta have a red card or they're the ones to go off—tit for tat. I've been up before five grand juries on charges of assault from highway robbery. I'm indicted now in Sacramento with the boys, my pals, guys with guts, who are in for ten and thirty years. You seen what they done to Ford and Suhr, just plain railroaded 'em. There's guts behind the movement. Men go out and risk their lives and worse, risk getting in the big pen for the cause and think nothing of it. They'll do a stick-up job or crack a safe just to get money to pay for a Wobbly Hall or to carry on propaganda, not for themselves but for what they think is right.

"But now I need more education. Most guys that get a little education sell us down the river. But I won't flop. I've been through the game. I got a few bucks, and I'm going up to Rand School or some place and get some facts to fight with. I came to lousy Mexico dead broke, but now I've made a stake. I always know how to beat the game so far as money is concerned. It's easy, but that ain't what I want. I don't want anything for myself."

Sims had been "damned" if he was going to fight for a country that gave him only "the stinking stick of things," where the "law tried to frame him" every chance it got—so he had beat it on south.

He'd made some "jack" running a garage on the Mex side. I suspect he was engaged in various kinds of contraband border-running. He got in well with the governor of the state and used to go in his car with half a dozen armed guards and run right along the border, guying the American soldiers, calling them "whores of the boss" and what not.

"One day some guys tried to kidnap me and run me back

across the border, but I laid three of 'em out colder'n a dog's nose. For all I know they're still stinking out there on the sand in the sagebrush.

"After that I beat it inland. In Cananea I picked up a bad chancre. I hit the sidedoor down to Mazatlán to get cured, but the doc there only made it worse. I had to come on here. I'm cured now, though I'm a funny sight, and I'm going back into the fight like a Kansas blow.

"You know, it's damn funny, I never got drunk in the States. All my surplus energy went into the movement, into bucking the boss. But down here I can't work it out. There's a swell bag down on Cuatemotzín Street . . ." He gave me a lascivious account of her particular brand of "ear-muff" tricks.

Sims intended to return to St. Louis, steal a car—he had a friend there who would shift the license plates—fill it full of I.W.W. literature and sow the Dakota harvest fields with it.

"You come with me," he urged. "We'll have a grand time, and we'll burn down every goddam haystack of every goddam scissor-bill farmer who won't pay a decent wage."

Henry Ricci, of Italian origin, was another Wobbly, who described how they rode the trains. God help the brakie who gave them a raw deal. The next night or so a brick would whizz out of the dark from the right of way, and he'd fold up. "Burning haystacks? . . . You just chuck out a piece of phosphorus at night, and when the sun comes up, you are miles and miles away; the stack goes up in flames."

He told a gruesome story of how they had done away with a stool-pigeon posing as a Wobbly. No type was more hated and feared than the secret "dick." They had suspected this guy for some time, so one day when he was in swimming, they found a secret-service card in his clothes. They tore it up but left his Wobbly card. They buried him up to the neck in sand

and poured syrup over his head so the ants and flies would torture him to death. The following week the local Wobbly paper blazoned with the headline: "Farmer Landlords Kill Worker."

Such was the singing, fighting, half-lawless movement that swept the western part of the United States during the second decade of this century. The kernel of its purpose was the one big industrial union. This idea, smothered during the World War and still more during post-war prosperity and subsequent depression, has been reborn in the C.I.O. under John Lewis.

TSARIST JEWELS IN HAITI

RABINDRANATH ROY CLAIMED TO be an Indian prince and to have originally escaped from India under sentence of death for opposing British rule. He was married to an attractive, intelligent woman, a Stanford graduate. As her parents were English and convinced of the everlasting sacredness of the Empire, for her to marry a Hindu of dark hue was evil enough; for him to be a Nationalist was *lèse-majesté*. They promptly disowned her.

Roy had had a spectacular career. From India he had escaped to the Dutch East Indies, then to China. In Canton, aided by German money, he organized a Chinese mercenary army to go through the Himalayas and free India.

His plans upset when China joined the Allies, Roy fled to Japan. When Japan entered, he had to flee to the United States.

There, soon after the United States declared war, Roy was indicted with many others on a conspiracy gun-running charge, with which he claimed to have no connection. But the mere fact that he was a Hindu Nationalist, working apparently for democracy and freedom in India, was sufficient menace to a nation trying to make the world safe for democracy.

In Mexico a certain German baron had outfitted several boats with munitions for India, which left from San Francisco. The baron, accompanied by a young German-American, who today is the correspondent in Mexico of a New York daily, went on one of the expeditionary boats.

It was captured by the British and towed into Hong Kong

or thereabouts. The German-American, in danger of being condemned to death, turned state's evidence and became one of the prosecution's star witnesses at the subsequent famous Hindu trial in San Francisco, a trial I frequently attended, and which reached dramatic bitterness. In the courtroom, I saw one Hindu prisoner shoot down another who, turned traitor, was testifying for the state. In the very act, the assailant was dropped by one of the federal marshals—two deaths in the space of two seconds.

Roy, indicted, but not apprehended, on orders of the Hindu revolutionary junta in New York, skipped out to Mexico to collect money from the Germans to promote revolt in India. It was hoped to arm boats from Mexican waters.

Roy, once he had received the money, broke with his colleagues. The other Hindu refugees soon considered him a traitor, especially Hernamba Gupta, head of the bona fide group. I did not know this when I met him in Mexico shortly after the War.

Tall, with long, slim, expressive hands and black-white eyes that flashed frequent wrath out of a very dark face, Roy had boundless energy. In a few months he mastered Spanish well enough to write pamphlets and speak from the platform.

Except for desiring Indian independence, he was in no sense a radical, for he believed firmly in child marriages, the caste system and most of the traditional evils that thus far have prevented India from achieving nationhood.

2

In 1920 a very mysterious individual appeared in Mexico, of whom George Wakefield and certain other initiates of our Fat Sing gatherings talked with awe. He was introduced to me at Roy's under the name of Brandywine, an alias given him by George in a moment of soul-release.

Brandywine, a heavy-set, heavy-handed, heavy-footed man with a hard jaw, posed as a hardware merchant. Long after, I saw his passport, bearing, if I remember rightly, the name of Ginzberg, a document issued by the Mexican commercial attaché to some country in Europe and stamped by the immigration officials of almost every nation in the Old World. Brandywine, alias Ginzberg—a former Socialist Labor Party man of Jewish origin from Chicago—it turned out was none other, apparently, than the famous Borodin, agent of the Soviet Government, who later headed the Canton military academy for the Kuomintang government.

Borodin, close to Trotsky and other high officials, had left Russia as an agent of the new Bolshevik government and the Comintern. As the revolutionary government had few financial resources those days, practically no negotiable outside currency, Borodin carried with him in false-bottom suitcases a million dollars' worth of old régime jewels, the proceeds to be used to spread Communist propaganda.

At the time Trotsky was very much an influence; world revolution was believed to be in the close offing; England was expected soon to declare war on Russia. To offset this, Trotsky was pushing active Bolshevik propaganda in Persia, Afghanistan, India, South Africa and all British possessions.

Borodin's particular job was to prevent the United States joining in the struggle on Britain's side, which the Russians considered inevitable, by precipitating such trouble in Mexico as to force us into armed intervention. Thus the United States would be kept so busy near at home it would be unlikely to assist England in European or Oriental affairs.

Borodin had convinced Mexican representatives abroad that Russia was prepared to buy enormous quantities of henequén for her harvest fields, and so secured a Mexican diplomatic passport to arrange for its purchase and negotiate for recognition.

Naturally, a diplomatic passport precluded any examination of his baggage, for though his jewels were well concealed they might possibly have been discovered.

After rushing from country to country, secret service men at his heels, Borodin—according to his story—shook them off in Switzerland.

But it is very difficult to dispose of a million dollars' worth of jewels or even contraband jewels at all. Every jeweler knows Russian-cut diamonds at a glance. No legitimate jewel house is going to buy any quantity of diamonds unless it knows their history. Even if Borodin had succeeded in disposing of the gems, in those post-war days, governments still kept close check on large money movements. Anyone depositing a large sum was thoroughly investigated, the source checked.

Before he could do anything, according to his story, Borodin was discovered anew in Switzerland; his arrest seemed imminent, so he put half the jewels and his most incriminating papers in a safe-deposit box.

After another hectic Odyssey around Europe, he finally took passage in the company of a well-known German Communist for Haiti, believing that from there it would be easy to get to Mexico. At the same time, he hoped to provoke agitation against American marine occupation.

But in small Haiti, the marines kept close tab on outsiders; nor could he get to Mexico except via the United States.

Again his identity, according to his story, was discovered. Afraid of being summarily shot by the marines, he left his suitcase of diamonds with the German and dashed up to the United States where he would at least be given a trial.

Not molested, he went on to Mexico where he contacted Roy. By this time Borodin had no funds. Roy paid all his expenses.

A messenger, sent to Haiti at Roy's expense to see the Ger-

man and have him bring the jewels on to Mexico, found the German, completely terrorized, claiming that the Haitian authorities had seized the suitcases. Legally, the German could be imprisoned, the jewels sold by the State, but the official who had discovered them, according to the German, was trying to clean up himself. Even less able to dispose of them secretly than Borodin, but anxious to graft, he was willing to turn the jewels back for \$100,000.

But how to raise \$100,000? Borodin's idea was to get a shipload of Yucatán henequén on credit, ostensibly for Russia, market it quickly in New Orleans and use the proceeds to retrieve the jewels.

The whole tale sounded fantastic to me, still does. Perhaps it was all merely Borodin's hocus-pocus to carry out other plans.

The henequén deal required influence. The most sympathetic man would likely be Felipe Carrillo, the big shot in the semi-Socialist experiment then being conducted in Yucatán.

Felipe Carrillo was one of the few real idealists produced by the Mexican revolution. Tall, handsome, forceful, he claimed—although probably mostly of Spanish blood—direct descent from the ancient Maya kings of Motul. Under Porfirio Díaz, Felipe had spent seven years in jail for having read the constitution in Maya to peons on the henequén plantations.

Now Felipe was offered half the value of the jewels if he would help retrieve them. At that time, Felipe had become disillusioned with Carranza's rule; soldiers and politicians had descended upon Yucatán and were harassing the League of Resistance of which Carrillo was the head; its members were being arrested and assassinated.

He himself had had to come to Mexico City to escape violence, so that he was not much use in getting hold of a shipload of henequén. Now, very bitter, he had decided the only solu-

tion was the secession of Yucatán and the other Maya areas from Mexico, the creation of an independent Maya State eventually to include Yucatán, Quintana Roo, Campeche, Tabasco, Chiapas and later most of Guatemala. For this project, he needed money.

What Felipe did not know, of course, was that by helping Borodin, he would also play into the hands of Borodin's deeper plot of world politics by throwing Mexico into partial turmoil.

Felipe was willing to take a gambler's chance on the jewels, but suggested as an alternative to paying graft to the dishonest Haitian official, the organizing of a filibuster expedition to seize the jewels. The official's house lay on the outskirts of Port-au-Prince. A well-planned landing party could make the haul and get away without being detected. Felipe could get a boat and armed men, his brother Benjamín would be in charge.

3

Not a part of these discussions, I learned about the jewels and Borodin's real identity much later.

Borodin was a hard dogmatic man, and the sparks flew between us. His idea (which he did speak about in front of me at this time), that the United States should be provoked into a war of conquest of Mexico so we could not help England against the Soviet Union, seemed to me brutal and dastardly. Human progress could not be served by promoting a war of colonial conquest and thus oppressing one great people to save another. I had come to love Mexico and its people. This was the same sort of *Realpolitik*, dressed up in a red flag, which I disliked so heartily in old feudal and capitalist Europe, which had already led to universal tragedy. Nor could I see progress furthered by converting the United States into an overtly brutal imperialistic nation, which ultimately would bring Fascism to our shores and destroy our traditional liberties. It was an evil

thing Borodin and Trotsky wanted to promote. The Russians are no more the chosen people of earth than are the Mexicans.

Borodin and I also clashed over another theme. The Soviet government, according to him, was about to engage in extensive eugenics experiments. All perfect physical and mental human specimens would be requisitioned for a human breeding farm and arbitrarily mated. The result would be a perfect race. In a few generations, with such superhuman materials, Russia would forge so far ahead of all other countries in intelligence and capacity as to leave the rest of the world in the dark ages.

According to Borodin, love was merely romantic nonsense with no place in a truly scientific society. Human nature could be trained to accept sex relations purely on the basis of service to society. The emotional uplift thus created would more than make up for any loss of love emotion.

The biological processes are not so simple as that. Nature has a way of distributing her gifts according to principles no man entirely knows. Undoubtedly our sex-life has been a phase of human activity least investigated and least directed by science. Undoubtedly the human race will develop new and better laws of sex, sex-restraint and sex-fulfillment, but to conscript millions forcibly for breeding purposes by the State, if more humanitarian than conscripting them to go to war and murder, not quite so hard on life and limb, nevertheless, like most forms of super-state regimentation, would defeat its purpose.

And if the Soviet Union should breed a superior race, would not this create havoc with her equalitarian program and institute a class system based not merely on sociological but actual biological differences? Why should not this physically superior group come to look upon the masses as they would upon horses, cows or other inferior beasts, doomed to hew wood and draw water?

4

Borodin, I later discovered, had told Roy that if he would found a Communist Party in Mexico, then get himself named delegate to the Third International Congress in Moscow, he, Borodin, would assist him to promote Hindu independence, a bigger opportunity for Roy than remaining marooned in Mexico, far from the theater of activities.

And so, along with schemes for retrieving the jewels, Roy, who had been a conservative Hindu Nationalist, suddenly joined the Mexican Socialist Party, a small group without an iota of political influence, which held meetings in the front of a shoemaker's house, in order to bore from within to change it into a Communist Party.

This was fiercely opposed by a red-bearded American, named Gale, who ran a magazine which he had made a vehicle for party affairs. But Roy, who had plenty of money, gave liberally to the Socialist war-chest and gained influence. He dug up dozens of pairs of shoes for his Socialist shoemaker to repair and paid gladly for the work though the shoes were botched. Roy packed the meetings with numerous hangers-on, mostly refugee foreigners whom he kept from starving to death by giving them all odd jobs, and succeeded in expelling Gale from the organization.

But before Roy could change the name of the party, in fact before daybreak, Gale blossomed out with a rump group he now called the Communist Party.

Roy had struck a snag. Not only was there a Communist Party in existence, but the Socialists were averse to changing the name of their party or its principles. After a stormy session, Roy, in turn, was obliged to secede with his little clique and form a second Communist Party—six members and a calico cat. Both his and Gale's organization now claimed to be the legiti-

mate offspring of the Third International. But Borodin gave official blessing to Roy's group.

Presently Borodin hurried back to Europe with another Mexican passport, secured under another name. The jewels and documents in the Swiss safe-deposit box (if they had ever existed) he claimed had been seized by the authorities there and turned over to the French government. According to Borodin, some of these documents so deeply implicated the Mexican government with respect to secret negotiations with Moscow, that President Carranza was squirming to deny them and that, in fact, they were responsible (this I quite doubted) for Mexico's exclusion from the League of Nations. Mexico, were all this true, was no longer a healthy place for Borodin.

Roy, having fixed up a local Communist Party and having founded a little paper which came out for a few issues, soon journeyed to Europe to attend the Moscow International.

Hernamba Gupta, the real representative of the Hindus, journeyed to Europe on his heels, eventually to Moscow also, to convince the Soviet authorities that Roy was a renegade without standing among the Hindu revolutionary and nationalist parties. But Roy had Borodin's seal of approval. And Borodin had the confidence of Trotsky and other higher-ups. Gupta came back unsuccessful and embittered.

Later I heard that Roy was sent down in some capacity to a province near the Persian frontier, in striking distance of India, to prepare an armed expedition. Still later, Borodin was sent over to China and presently asked that Roy be sent there to assist him.

By that time Roy had become more Pope than the Pope, more Communist than Lenin and so intensely and rigidly doctrinaire that his stand as much as anything else destroyed the unity of the Kuomintang, brought on the break between the Communists and that body and ultimately led to very hostile

relations between the Soviets and China which almost resulted in war. As a result the Chinese State was seized by Chiang Kai-Shek; the militarist and foreign capital rode in the saddle side by side. The present rape of China by Japan was thus prepared.

5

When Roy was about to leave Mexico, he asked me if I would stay in his house for two months. Though it was now nearly two years after the World War, the English, with customary high-handedness, were searching neutral boats on the high seas in order to take off persons they were anxious to apprehend. Roy, constantly shadowed by English secret service agents, wished to slip away clandestinely.

He left a trunkful of effects, which, if I did not receive instructions within a certain time, I was to destroy. Roy then took me into his confidence about many things I have here related.

Felipe and Benjamín Carrillo came around to see me a number of times to talk with me about the proposed expedition to Haiti. They were growing skeptical, now that both Borodin and Roy had cleared out so unconcernedly leaving half a million dollars' worth of jewels. Benjamín suggested that if they decided on the expedition, I go along.

The adventure of it appealed, regardless of my grave doubts as to Borodin's veracity. With the sea-captain we pored over charts and plans. I could visualize our boat slipping along quietly under the tropic night sky, the landing, shots, crashing doors, scuffles, the quick getaway through the surf.

But presently the Obregón revolt came along. Felipe and Benjamín disappeared. Felipe forgot about his Maya secession movement and the filibuster expedition as soon as he saw a chance to help oust Carranza by aiding Obregón.

Carranza was driven out of the capital to a bloody grave.

The next I saw of Benjamín was when he came riding down the Pasco near the Independence monument with the victorious troops of Obregón, a garland of flowers around his neck and a red geranium stuck in the muzzle of his gun.

This is all I ever learned about the famous Borodin jewels. Whether there were any such jewels, I don't know. That Borodin's story about them was in all ways correct, seems to me doubtful. Whether they were really seized by the Haitian official or perhaps were stolen by the German Communist, are in the realm of conjecture. Perhaps their value was exaggerated that Borodin might use them as bait for his Mexican plans; I don't know.

And if they were seized by a Haitian official, what he did with them is one of those mysteries that will probably never be disclosed. Perhaps some black voodoo princess wears a Romanof gem at her throat.

And India, the last I heard, was a British colony.

REVOLUTION

MEXICO, BEFORE CARRANZA FELL, was getting more tumultuous. His army, thoroughly corrupt, was even selling munitions to rebels. The generals themselves kept trouble stirred up. The more trouble, the more funds and supplies needed, the more chance for graft.

But trouble was now getting out of hand. Villa, with the help of a trained military man, General Felipe Angeles, winning victory after victory in the north, finally took several important cities in Chihuahua and Durango.

The great Emiliano Zapata, the agrarian rebel in the south, had been treacherously ambushed by a subordinate of Pablo González, but his armies, under such leaders as General Fox and De la O., were still active. Pelaez, subsidized by petroleum companies, was still harassing the government in Tamaulipas and northern Vera Cruz.

Armed conflict was popping up in many quarters.

So much money was being poured out for Carranza's army that the teachers were going without pay. The Mexican schools had rapidly become homes for the bat, the rat and the tarantula.

The exasperated Federal District teachers finally went on strike. Street-car workers and chauffeurs walked out in sympathy.

I covered the meeting of teachers in the National Preparatory School auditorium when the strike was voted. Two thousand people flowed into the hall and crowded every inch of standing room until even the speaker's rostrum became a scarcely visible island.

Various teachers volunteered rooms in their houses; others offered to provide rooms. A union leader brought his little girl of seven to the front, who emptied out a big can filled with small change she had collected to aid the strike. Three prominent lawyers volunteered their services. A Congressman spoke a word of sympathy; a member of the Ayuntamiento, which was not paying the teachers, announced he had resigned his position in protest.

Union delegates appeared, straight from their jobs, in blue overalls and black shirts: various confederations and many independent unions, the electrical workers, bakers, tram workers, chauffeurs and printers. One loose-limbed fellow in blue overalls, from the bakers' union, spoke in a heavy monotone, with frequent shakes of his ham-like fists. His strong, pounding words leaped across the crowd and shook the rear windows.

"Bread is life. It is bread you are fighting for—life. He who makes bread rules the world. We, the bakers, are with you, and if your right to life is not granted, then we shall refuse them who deny you bread, the right to live. Bread! Bread is all!" Melodramatic, simple.

In vain I tried to picture American city teachers on strike and listening to speeches by workers in greasy overalls. Years later I was to recall this when the teachers in Chicago, so long without pay, were cussed out with braggart manners by Charles Dawes for demanding what was owed them for honest labor. Mexican teachers wouldn't have taken that lying down.

Soon Mexico City was without conveyances, except for a few cars run with police guards. Shortly, the typesetters and printers walked out. Not a paper, daily or otherwise, was printed in the Federal District. Was Germany still refusing to sign the peace treaty? Had Italy returned to the conferences? Was Wilson still making speeches out of words? Mexico did not know.

The government blustered, posted a proclamation, threatened to invoke the treason act, doused a few women paraders with fire hoses, then capitulated.

Government corruption didn't help the situation growing constantly more aggravated.

Amazing was the short-change crisis. Two cabinet ministers cornered all small coins. Overnight no one could get change. Business was nearly paralyzed. With a twenty-peso gold piece one could go far. Restaurants would let you walk out without paying rather than part with small coins. People rode street-cars and busses free. The two grafting ministers set up private exchange booths, charging enormous percentages.

To meet the crisis, Carranza did not threaten to shoot his offending cabinet ministers as he had the teachers, but issued pesos and fifty centavo paper notes, which literally flew from hand to hand. No one wished to hold the paper money of a government crumbling. Carranza also coined tiny two peso gold coins, about as big around as a small pea, soon nicknamed by ready-tongued Mexico City, "the tears of Carranza."

2

To add to national confusion, elections were coming up. Carranza was trying to impose a nonentity civilian, called slur-ringly "Meester" Ignacio Bonillas because he had lived so long in the United States he could no longer speak good Spanish. Two prominent generals also had definite political ambitions, the rival candidates, Pablo González and Alvaro Obregón, the latter the real military genius of the revolution and undoubtedly the favorite leader among the army men as well as the most popular figure in the country. Carranza made the mistake of his life in breaking with Obregón.

Rumors of revolution were soon rife. Obregón was soon charged with army conspiracy, and to prevent his campaigning,

was forbidden to leave Mexico City—tantamount to an arrest.

Obregón's followers all resigned from their government posts. Plutarco Elías Calles, Minister of Industry, Commerce and Labor, who was later to become dictator, went north to Sonora, ostensibly to campaign, but obviously to prepare for the impending revolt on the grounds of the elections not being free.

I met Calles at this time—a coarse, ruthless man of extraordinary intelligence and force and a glimmer of idealism. "El Turco," for he was known to have Syrian blood, had a long, box-like face with cold, black, slit eyes, a creased mouth and a foundry jaw.

I had known of him when I had gone through Sonora, for he had been military governor. Violators of his prohibition decree had been lined up and shot without benefit of trial—an arbitrariness he was not to forget when later he became dictator of the country.

Notwithstanding such terrorism, the German-American for whom I had built an Indian hut on the Yaqui River llano risked his neck by selling bootleg tequila in a back room by lantern light, the soldiers of the local garrison being the heaviest customers. An Indian made the tequila back in the brush and brought it in by burro to a hole in Schneider's back cactus fence. It was sold at a big profit.

After I reached Mexico City, Calles became a member of Carranza's cabinet, but was always an Obregón man, and in the present crisis, he rowed his political boat swiftly back to Sonora, decks cleared for action. Carranza intended to impose Bonillas whatever the cost, whatever the vote. The cost would be high. Revolt was inevitable. Disorder was increasing. Carranza, by his obstinancy, was doomed.

Despite the careful watch kept over Obregón, when driving one dark evening in Chapultepec Park, he jumped out into the bushes unseen by government cars following. Disguised as a

brakeman, the one-armed general, accompanied by Luis N. Morones, a rising labor leader, went on a freight to Guerrero to revolt. The whole country flared up like lighted powder.

I was to meet Morones later. Originally an electrician, a big, pig-like man, he was always meticulously dressed and perfumed, his hands glittering with diamonds. He had founded the Regional Confederation of Labor (CROM) and the Mexican Labor Party, both of which supported Obregón.

For weeks now, the pavements of Mexico City were to ring with cavalry going to the front. From the well-situated apartment window of Roberto Haberman on Avenida Juárez, I watched one enormous detachment going down toward the station. "More volunteers for Obregón," said Roberto.

He was right. General after general turned over to Obregón. He also had the Yaqui Indians of Sonora, the ablest fighters in the Republic. The revolution spread rapidly.

Up at the War Department my class dwindled. One by one the young officers were slipping off, not to fight for the government but to betray it, to join the revolutionary forces—an ominous sign if the personal staff of Carranza had no loyalty. Presently Pablo González disappeared. Several of his generals joined the revolt.

Mexico City was in a panic. Everyone still remembered the "Tragic Ten Days" of artillery duel between Felix Díaz and Victoriano Huerta that terrorized the city. People had almost starved. Now folk rushed to the stores—I joined the rush—to lay in ample provisions. Prices soared.

One day in May, 1920, Mexico City was plastered over with big posters carrying blatant proclamations by the military commandant, Francisco Murgía, that the Carranza government would never give up the fight, would never abandon the capital.

Actually, as I knew from my War Office contacts, the government was packing up to get out. Carranza was planning to

establish his capital in Vera Cruz, where his son-in-law, General Cándido Aguilar, was in charge.

All that night the government packed. Seventeen trains were put in readiness, steam up, for flight.

In the apartment above me lived a young Carranza officer. All night I heard boxes being frantically shoved about; then, about daybreak, doors slamming, the loud wailing of a woman left behind.

Up early, I rushed down to the War Department. Boxes and supplies were still being carted out. Everything from old uniforms, dusty broken drums, battered bugles, archives, were being passed rapidly from hand to hand and loaded on trucks to be rushed to the station. Everybody had lost his head. Panic ruled.

I tried to see the Minister of War. People, scampering about, unheeded my queries. I walked into his office unaccosted. It was vacant.

Down at the Buena Vista station trains were pulling out, loaded with troops, officers, cabinet officials and their entourages, women, bird-cages and lap dogs. High officials decamped with their numerous domestic menages; one prominent general had six mistresses salted down on one train.

Learning that the Olive presidential train had been made up at Colonia station, I rushed over. The place was Babel. Along the tracks were piled up most of the treasury—70,000,000 pesos gold in coffers. From one coffer, minus a lid, the yellow coins had spilled over the runway. Excited train-hands, officers, messengers, all sorts of persons rushed up and down the platform, trampling on the gold, paying not the slightest heed to it.

All the blinds of the Olive train were drawn. Was Carranza aboard? Presently all unauthorized persons were cleared off the platform.

Later, as the Olive train rolled through the neighboring

suburb of Guadalupe, Carranza stood on the rear platform, his long white beard floating in the breeze as he tossed pennies to the Indians. In his hour of doom his austere aloofness had melted to benevolent exhibitionism.

I circled the Zócalo in a taxi. The first rebel troops swept in with wild clatter in front of the cathedral and down Francisco Madero Avenue, the main business thoroughfare—hard wiry men, dirty and unshaven from weary weeks in the saddle, red bandannas around their necks, sombreros tilted rakishly, gun butts on the hip moving slightly with the motion of the horses.

Business houses were open, though iron shutters had been drawn down over show-windows, and steel entrance doors were also half closed, ready to be slammed shut in case of an emergency. A few private automobiles edged along the street. The wild rebels politely wheeled their columns to one side to let traffic pass.

The police had gone on strike the night before. During twenty-four hours the city had been almost without police protection. But only two petty crimes were reported, a customary stabbing affair in a cheap saloon and one bread store broken open. It spoke well for the morale of a city of nearly a million inhabitants that at a time of uncertainty, with the capital deprived of all effective government, nothing beyond the ordinary happened. When one remembers the mobs at the time of the Boston police strike, I still find it hard to explain the calmness of Mexico City at such a time.

Now, this gala morning of shifting authority, the newsboys had voluntarily taken their places at the main intersections to work the stop and go signs for traffic. Drivers obeyed them as implicitly as though the boys had had on uniforms, a tin star and the majesty of the law fully behind them—in fact it became a good-humored game to do so.

3

I dashed out to Guadalupe where one of the escaping trains had been derailed. Autos were hurtling out at great speed. One car was that of General Pablo González, in charge of the Mexico City situation.

Behind him, in another big car, a frantic woman, beautiful, young, elegantly dressed, was sitting on the edge of the rear seat, wringing her hands, weeping, and urging her chauffeur to go faster.

I told my driver to keep up with them. About halfway to Guadalupe, González' car swerved into a field and across the clods to the railroad right of way. There the engine of one of Carranza's trains lay on its side, derailed, jetting steam.

The woman's car and ours swept on down the road. The brakes of her machine screeched. After some difficulty, for it was a big touring car and traffic was heavy, her chauffeur got it turned around. He headed into the field after González, and I after both.

The woman jumped out, ran in her high-heeled shoes across the clods after the general, calling his name frantically.

When he turned around surprised, she flung herself on her knees and clasped him about the legs. "Where is he?" she sobbed. "What have you done to him?"

"Get up, Madam." He gave her his hand to rise. "He's a prisoner in the National Palace. Nothing will happen to him." He wrote out a pass for her to see whomever she was so concerned about.

We raced on toward Guadalupe. Now, Red Cross autos were shrieking along the highway, their flags stiff in the breeze. Evidently some major accident had happened.

My driver put on speed, and we swung out along the Pachuca highway. Across a field lay another wrecked train. Upon two

near-by hills were dark clusters of federal cavalry. It looked like trouble.

The train had been wrecked in a fantastic fashion. A crazy rebel colonel, first to enter the beleaguered city and finding it already deserted, had dashed to the railway station to try to intercept the Carranza trains. The last—a cavalry train—had just pulled out.

The colonel, with a dozen men, jumped into the cab of an extra engine, and hurtled down the track after the escaping federals. Thirteen men rushing to attack an army! Don Quixote never mounted such a steed! Garibaldi never did anything madder!

Five miles out near Guadalupe, he almost caught up with the last train. Pulling the throttle wide, he and the twelve men jumped. The wild engine tore down the track and crashed into the rear of the train.

The last car, full of camp women, was smashed to bits. The next car was quite uninjured, but the third from last was half telescoped. The fourth was again uninjured, the next a third telescoped. Every other car in the whole train had been damaged.

Mangled bodies were being laid out on an irrigation bank to be taken off by the Red Cross. A desk lay half in the mud. On the dirty waters of the ditch floated government papers, God knows from what archive, and a lone military cap.

Here and there were strewn rolls of barbed wire, which had been taken along for emergency breastworks. As I had crossed the field, a well-dressed man and a sandal-shot Indian were hurrying off with one of these rolls of wire and grinning gleefully—a minor irony in a macabre scene.

I stood there, talking to this person and the other—all witnesses of scenes of recent excitement are anxious to talk. The smell of human blood and scum-covered water smote my nos-

trils. Half a mile away, from out dense clumps of eucalyptus trees, rose the golden towers and azure domes of a dozen churches of God in the town that for centuries has been the greatest religious center of Mexico.

Slowly the federal cavalry filed down from the hill tops. They made a picturesque picture, silhouetted against the sky, as they met in saddle between the two hills, then, united, came forward in formation toward the train. But not to attack—they, the survivors of the accident, had tamely surrendered to the colonel and his dozen men.

As a reward, the colonel was made a general. But his dare-devil star did not remain long in ascendancy. A few years later he was shot dead in a Puebla whore-house.

4

I whirled back to town in time to hear General Treviño read a proclamation from the National Palace balcony. He took over the city in the name of the Revindicating Revolution and warned merchants not to raise prices under penalty of drastic punishment. The great bells of the cathedral began ringing.

An artillery company clattered up. I joked with the soldiers and photographed them. On a side street, a group of cavalry came along at a mad gallop. At their head rode General Treviño. Rushing out into the middle of the street, I held up my hand in warning gesture.

At sharp orders from Treviño, the whole troop slid to a stop. I whipped out my kodak and photographed them.

Treviño laughed good-naturedly, joked about the disheveled appearance of his men, and returned my salute as he dashed on again. I have always marveled at the Mexican's quick geniality in moments of stress and trouble. I should have been taken off and quartered.

I had only one difficulty that day taking photographs. Just

as I was focusing on a company of rebel soldiers in Tacubaya, the captain told me roughly I couldn't take the picture. But as he turned to walk back to his company, I hurriedly snapped a photograph of his burly rear and the men. The soldiers laughed at my ruse.

He whirled around angrily, but I was nonchalantly walking away, whistling at the sky.

DEATH IN THE HILLS

WHERE WAS OBREGÓN, THE BIG Chief of the revolution, the new conqueror?

There were all sorts of rumors. I dashed out to Tacuba and Atzacapotzalco—that was the way Cortés once fled from Mexico City and wept. I did find Pablo González again in an office on Humboldt Street—a stocky, self-important man with large mustaches and spectacles. He was busy setting up a government. Having jumped into the revolution at the last moment, when success was assured, he had gone out but a short distance from the capital to rally several faithful generals and their forces and thus entered the capital well ahead of Obregón. González was also a candidate for the Presidency. He now had the whip hand. Would he seize power and beat Obregón to first base?

The cabinet for the provisional government he had appointed contained only González men, though he had left the office of the Provisional Presidency vacant.

Where was Obregón?

It looked as though trouble in the city was only beginning.

2

The following day I learned that Obregón had established headquarters in the little Tacubaya Hotel in the suburbs. I hastened out just in time to witness the famous interview between him and González. They embraced like long-lost brothers. Obregón, smiling, serene, assured González that all he had done thus far was wise and proper.

The latter cordially invited Obregón to enter the city and take charge. "Come into my house," said the spider to the fly. But Obregón, wily old fox, announced that he would make his formal entry at the head of troops in a big parade the following Sunday.

All the rest of the week he hurried up loyal troops, among them his much feared Yaqui Indian battalions, trainload after trainload, until he had Mexico City surrounded by over 50,000 men.

Would González give up the prize without a struggle?

3

What was happening to Carranza? . . . His trains kept on. But near Apizaco, four hours out, they began to be fired upon. Presently the track was torn up ahead. His forces had to entrench themselves and beat off snipers while the rails were painfully relaid.

They would creep ahead a few miles only to have to repeat the process. Attacks became more severe. Rapidly Carranza was being surrounded.

His Vera Cruz retreat was cut off. The second-in-command in that state, a treacherous Indian, General Guadalupe Sánchez, had revolted, setting aside Carranza's son-in-law, Cándido Aguilar. Carranza now found himself headed directly into the jaws of the lion—or to change metaphor, out of the Mexico City frying pan into the fire of Vera Cruz. His trains would never get there.

Horses were gotten out. Saddle bags were stuffed with gold and provisions and ammunition. A lane was opened through the scattered attackers and whining bullets.

Carranza, mounted on a white horse, his white beard flying in the breeze, dashed off toward the Puebla mountains, followed by those of his cabinet who had remained loyal, Cabrera,

Berlanga and others; by trusted officers and a large troop of cavalry.

Behind, there on the trains being peppered with bullets, were the sweet mistresses, the parrots and canaries in their gilded cages, the lap dogs, and the monogrammed baggage full of lingerie. It would not be an entirely empty victory for the attackers.

Bullets were now clipping through the mauve shades of the lights on the Presidential train. Women were screaming.

Behind, on the train, was the gold of the nation in big coffers, waiting the scoop of greedy hands.

There, and still further back in Mexico City, was the power Carranza had so unworthily tried to retain.

It was a forlorn cause Carranza was leading now—some vague thing about constitutionality—this fleeing man on a white horse off in the mighty wilds of the Sierra Madre. He was deserted now by all but a few faithfuls, who grew constantly fewer in number.

Presently Carranza would be buried in Mexico City itself, but not one of the thousands who had battered at his table but a few weeks before would go to see him lowered into the ground.

For now, as Carranza fled, the bayonets of his enemies ruled Mexico City. They ruled Guadalajara. They ruled Puebla. They ruled Vera Cruz. Diéguez' crack Army of the East, on which Carranza had set such a store, had cracked up.

Carranza now hoped to make the port of Tampico. He did not know that the bandit legions of General Pelaez, trusted buddy of the American petroleum companies, were already in full control of the city of spouting black wells, that Pelaez was already banqueting there with the lords of the loaves and fishes.

The little band, led by the white beard, penetrated deeper

and deeper into the wild Puebla mountains. Desertions increased. Carranza was left with a mere handful.

And so, about the time Obregón was making his triumphal entry into Mexico City, Carranza was murdered at night in his sleep by a bandit crew which had flung its fortunes in with the Obregón revolution. And so ended the man who had overthrown the bloody Huerta; who—with Obregón's assistance—had beaten Villa; who had been the father, though perhaps not too willingly, of the famous 1917 constitution; who had instituted the first agrarian laws, not because he believed in them but because the peasants were restive; who had fought for Mexican rights over its own petroleum; who had announced a new doctrine for the continent as opposed to the outworn Monroe Doctrine—a dogmatic, forceful, obstinate man of narrow prejudices and lofty vision. Under his hand, in spite of him, the revolutionary era took shape and grew into tangible economic as well as political proportions.

4

By Sunday, when Obregón was ready with his forces for his triumphal entry, everybody had jumped on his band wagon. His vast parade—a picturesque affair—started from Tacubaya at eight in the morning. The military academy cadets, in snappy red and black uniforms, perspiringly did the exaggerated goose-step the full four miles or so, a strange contrast to the Yaqui Indians shuffling along in one-thong sandals to the queer screech of funny little deer-head drums. Small, beribboned straw hats perched on their pointed skulls, giving an old-maidenish appearance to men with fierce, war-like countenances. The Zapatista agrarians, big fellows, enormous gray felt sombreros loaded down with silver ornaments, rode behind black skull and crossbone flags.

Obregón himself jogged along on a little cayuse. It was a

blistering hot day, so he had taken off his coat and folded it into a strap on his saddle-pommel. And so the hero came to town in a blue shirt and red suspenders, clear to the National Palace to take over the nation.

Roberto Haberman went into ecstasies over those suspenders. Here was a man of the people who loved the people. Roberto became quite provoked when I expressed some doubts. Obregón represented the way the popular tide was running, but I preferred to base my prognostications on his record—not on a pair of red suspenders. I have seen any number of card-sharpers in suspenders, but I never noticed any particular love for the people among any of them.

Obregón, famed even then for his bawdy jokes, was a heavy-set, calm, jovial man, grim around the eyes, but with a countenance that looked open, ruddy and Irish. Certainly he had the air of a Tammany politician. Some people said his name, "Obregón"—though it appears far back in Spanish and Mexican history—was a corruption of "O'Brien." Most Spaniards have Celtic blood. Obregón was said to have also a large percentage of Yaqui blood. It was pretty hard to trace family antecedents in Mexico those days.

The military procession was still going by at two o'clock when the hot sun and an appetite drove me indoors. This perhaps was the biggest single display of military force in Mexico's entire history, with the possible exception of Díaz' entry over fifty years before.

5

Shortly, General González was accused of plotting revolt. Soldiers sent to get him—according to report—found him hiding up a chimney and pulled him down covered with soot. A great fire-eating general and a presidential candidate dragged down by

the heels from a dirty chimney—all Mexico snickered. González was laughed out of public life.

Obregón ordered him released. González betook himself post-haste to San Antonio, biting his nails, fuming, not to go back to his native land for seventeen years. But he went well-heeled, set for life. It had not been unprofitable, being a revolutionist and helping the people.

As a result of this turnover, I met a number of interesting people. Antonio Díaz Soto y Gama—whom Obregón shortly helped organize the National Agrarian Party—was a Mexico City lawyer who had been in the left wing of Madero's old Liberal Party. When Huerta came into power, Don Antonio avoided being shot, as Duque and other leaders, by fleeing to Zapata's stronghold in the south. He had ridden with the agrarian rebel in the saddle for seven long years. It was Soto y Gama who helped frame many of Zapata's manifestos giving land to the peasants.

He lived in a *vivienda* somewhere out Zarco way. Big Zapatistas with enormous sombreros, weighing from seven to twelve pounds, came stalking in and out, most of them dressed in black jackets and skin-tight black trousers buttoning down the side and silver-plated from chin to instep. With Soto y Gama and Zapatista friends, I attended a barbecue out on an hacienda off the Tlapam road, a gay affair to welcome him home. He had not seen his family and many friends in seven years.

I also met General Benjamín Hill, partly of American origin, undoubtedly the ablest general next to Obregón and a definite rival of Calles in the scheme of things. Shortly he was poisoned, as have been a number of prominent rivals of Calles since then.

One man who definitely benefited from the turnover was labor-leader Morones, who had gone off with Obregón to raise revolt. Morones was now put in charge of the National

Munition Works and the army purchasing department, with a combined budget of 30,000,000 pesos, one of the most lucrative posts in the government.

Roberto Haberman, looking for a place to land, found it with Morones. Having planned for some time to leave for Europe, I had turned over to Roberto the English Institute, which he ran between the hours when working at the American Drug Store as clerk and pharmacist. He wanted to get into local politics and chuck both jobs. Morones gave him his chance.

Haberman, of Rumanian Jewish origin, had been a California lawyer—I had known his brother-in-law out there—and was now married to a very handsome, tall, Swedish girl named Thorburg. Haberman had come to Mexico for the Hindus who wanted to start a land colony in Yucatán, then famed as a sort of Socialist Utopia. In Yucatán, he soon got in well with Felipe Carrillo and was put in charge of the co-operative stores of the Liga de Resistencia.

But when Carranza menaced Carrillo's position in the state, Haberman had to get out and came up to Mexico City. Soon after the Obregón revolution he paid a call on Morones, whom previously he had considered something of a shyster, and came back a complete convert. From then on he was very intimate with Morones and soon became a prominent liaison officer between him and Gompers of the American Federation of Labor.

SUICIDE IN NOTRE DAME

WHEN CARRANZA FLED, I WAS out of my job at the War Department. It also looked as though I would lose my job at the American School.

Ill-feeling between the United States and Mexico had been fanned to bitterness by the oil companies and by the underhanded Fall Senate Investigating Committee, a Doheny Inquisition. Later Fall, dragged into the Teapot Dome exposé and made the goat, went to jail. In the meantime he and Doheny were doing all possible to foment difficulties between the two countries.

The parents' association of the American School passed a bitter resolution denouncing Mexico and the Mexicans, a position with which I clashed sharply. Foreigners who acted that way in the United States would soon have been persecuted, arrested or deported. The superintendent, Mrs. Delia Bohan, a fine woman, insisted that my work was highly satisfactory, that my private views were my own business. As a result, the board discharged her and me, at the same time cheating me out of my vacation money and the three months' salary guaranteed by Mexican law for unjustifiable dismissal.

In view of the board's anti-Mexican attitude I could have made it hot for them and collected the money, but Albert Blair, a well-to-do Englishman who had been loyal to me throughout the fracas, begged me to let the matter drop. He had the Englishman's idea that it was demeaning for an American to utilize Mexican courts against Americans. I have never

relished legal messes; one can usually spend one's time to better advantage than wasting days on days, energy and good-humor by bitterly standing up for too petty rights.

And my dismissal was the best favor ever done me, worth far more than the few dollars I unjustly lost. It hastened my determination regarding what I intended to do in life, namely, write, and freed me to take an entirely new course of action—to go abroad.

Except for touching up, I had completed my book on Mexico in between manifold duties and excitements; the first four articles I had ever written had been promptly accepted by the first magazines to which I had offered them—magazines of high national reputation. I was encouraged and felt that I could now make my way easily as a free-lance. I had long been eager to see Spain and Italy as a background for understanding Mexico and Latin America.

When still in my teens, I had sworn that I was going to see the wide world while I was young, my senses alert, and not wait till I had varicose veins and a bank account and could not really enjoy traveling or profit by intimate contacts. To travel, for me, has been a form of accumulating capital, much better than accumulating stocks and bonds to be lost in the first depression.

In this desire I was substantially helped by Blair and his wife, Antonieta Rivas, a slim, very pretty Mexican woman, unusually intelligent, with much social grace and a fine knowledge of literature. She attended my Shakespeare lectures faithfully.

The Rivas family, quite famous in Mexico, was wealthy. Antonieta's father had been the most favored architect of the Porfirio Díaz régime; among other things, had erected the famous independence monument on the Paseo de la Reforma. He was a huge man, well along in years, who rose up like a vast

pyramid from short stubby legs and the most enormous paunch I have ever seen, to a tall pointed fez, his customary head-gear when at home.

Albert Blair had joined the Madero revolutions for idealism and adventure and had been known as "*Capitán Adelante*," because "*adelante*"—"forward"—was then the only Spanish word he knew.

With his father-in-law's aid, he was now embarked on an ambitious residential subdivision project of Chapultepec Heights. Antonieta, in contrast to her husband's now more methodical and conservative approach to life, was temperamental, erratic, imaginative. Ultimately they were divorced.

After I gave up my apartment, for three weeks before I left for Europe, I was invited to stay at the Rivas home, an old colonial mansion modernized for present-day comfort, on Calle de Héroes. Such mellow surroundings were balm after my unpleasant fracas with the ignorant bunch on the American school board.

One morning shortly before I was to leave, I found a big bag of silver in my room. I asked who went around the house leaving money so carelessly.

Antonieta told me that whatever I found in my room was mine. I protested. But she had found out I was going fourth-class to Europe and therefore must need money. I assured her I had enough and merely had preferred to economize on fare in order to stay longer and enjoy myself better once I landed on the Continent.

Her act was the holdover of an ancient Mexican custom; for in the old days, especially on haciendas, every visitor, known or not, would find in his room a small cache of gold or silver. If in need he was supposed to help himself.

I told Antonieta I did not know when, if ever, I could pay

her back, but she urged me, "Please don't make it into something important."

Years passed before I saw her again. When I returned to Mexico after three years in Europe, she was out of Mexico herself, and soon after, I learned, she and her husband had separated. He was actively becoming successful. But Antonieta, a restless spirit, was seeking for something beyond the mediocrity of much of her class—the old washed-up aristocrats of the country—an opportunity to play a vital and significant rôle in life. She never found it.

Several times, along in 1928, I saw her. She looked young and fresh and eager, but spiritually troubled, seeking something she had not found.

Then, in the winter of 1931, I was at a party at the home of Frances Adams and Alex Gumberg in New York when a newspaper man came in and asked me if I had ever known Antonieta Rivas de Blair? She had just committed suicide in Notre Dame Cathedral.

I got my hat and left the party to walk the icy streets for a long time. Her death, in such a manner, was a dreadful waste.

2

Unexpectedly, I had another unpleasant episode before I left Mexico. When I took my papers to the American consulate to get my passport, the clerk sent me in to the consul himself, a dried-up little shrimp, with all the curious priggishness the service so frequently attracts.

"I won't give you a passport," he said in a sneering drone.

"Here are my papers, all in order. I can provide as many legal witnesses as are required."

"The granting of a passport is at my discretion. I shall send your papers on to Washington. I am not inclined to help you at all."

Never having met him before, but sensing great hostility, I requested an explanation.

"I don't like the company you keep," he said curtly.

I rose abruptly, picking up my papers. "The company I keep is none of your damn' business, and you can go to hell. Don't bother to send to Washington. I'm going to Europe next week—on my passage already booked."

In three days, through a lawyer friend, I had a Mexican passport in my hand.

3

To embark on the *Lafayette*, as bubonic plague was rampant in Vera Cruz, I had to journey to the far southern port of Puerto México. This meant changing trains at Córdoba in the early morning and traveling south along the Vera Cruz littoral to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, a long jerky ride through the jungles. The line had just been reopened to general travel, except for occasional trains, for the first time since the downfall of dictator Victoriano Huerta in 1914. This was now 1920 and the roadbed had scarcely been cared for. The train could only crawl along, lurching and bumping. A freight train ahead of us took a nose dive into a swamp, and when the track was finally cleared, a driving tropical storm made us creep along more slowly than ever. We arrived at Santa Lucrecia junction more than ten hours late.

From the station we slopped through the rain to a slatternly hotel, rickety and smelly, with bad food and, as we discovered the next morning, which dawned ferociously hot, pestered with swarms of flies. Our grumpy feelings were offset by the clear lazy morning, the profusion of bright flowers, the dreamy swelter of the cornfields, finally by the very neat and clean-transisthmian train.

A whole bunch of bananas those days cost five centavos.

Soon the big fat stems were dangling from nearly every rack in the car.

In Puerto México, after the customary visits to the immigration and customs authorities, necessitating long treks through the sand which drifted nearly a foot deep in the main street, we were finally aboard and headed across the Gulf.

4

At certain seasons of the year, transatlantic liners cruising between Europe, Cuba, Mexico, and South America did a thriving business carrying fourth-class immigrants. The Spanish Galician farm-hands, after getting in the harvest in Spain, journeyed to Cuba in time to cut the winter sugar *zafra*; from there they embarked for Argentina to work in the wheat fields. Thus, unlike most itinerant labor, they were able to work not only all the year around but to do considerable traveling.

For this traffic, the liners had enormous bunk rooms in the hold with accommodations in each for from four hundred to fifteen hundred passengers. In larger vessels four thousand persons could be herded below deck. The bunks consisted of sail-cloth slung between iron racks, tier above tier, five high, bunk touching bunk. The passengers had to crawl over each other to get their beds. When one moved, thirty people moved. It could be a messy place when high seas were running and people got sick.

Fortunately this was off season, so there were only about forty steerage passengers. Besides, I had a sisal hammock which I lashed to two cables on deck and slept out under the stars. Only one night, when a storm raked the decks from end to end, did I have to spend below.

Out from Havana a Cuban, seeing me in the hammock, became excited.

"You aren't really going to sleep here!" he exclaimed.

"And why not?"

"It's full moon tonight. You'll go blind."

I laughed and he argued lengthily, went off half angrily, convinced he had met the world's most stupid individual.

Early next morning he rushed up on deck and was visibly annoyed when he found I wasn't blind.

Each steerage passenger was assigned to a food unit of ten and received a tin knife, fork, spoon, plate, and a cup and a communal double-decker pail for soup and stew, also a can with a spout for wine—very watered. The members of each group took turns going down deep into the bowels of the ship to get food. To eat it, we had to squat around on the narrow deck space or the hatchways. Second-class passengers used to lean over the rail to watch us.

5

In Havana a stevedores' strike left us without coal to proceed. Because of the bubonic plague, though we had not touched Vera Cruz, a yellow flag was hoisted over our boat, and for the five days we were stranded there we were kept in quarantine, not allowed ashore.

Havana harbor in August is an oven. The decks sizzled; below it was stifling. Hot odors oozed up—stale food, urine, excrement, tar, paint, rusty iron. The toilets stank. The unwashed people stank.

First-class passengers, though, were allowed to go ashore at will. Bubonic plague, or any other evil, can go anywhere, anytime, provided it possesses a large enough bank account.

We finally got some coal but our vessel had to creep along in order to make it last out the trip—twenty-one days in all from Puerto México to Coruña.

CASTLES IN SPAIN

MY FIRST GLIMPSE OF CORUÑA from the sea captivated me. We hove to in a gray, misty dawn beside the ancient gray fortress of San Antón. Everything looked medieval, and all the magic legends of old Spain swarmed about me: the Cid, Irving's Tales of the Alhambra, Don Quixote, Cortés, Pizarro, Charles V, the Moors and the Saracens, the Visigoths, the Spanish Armada, Wellington, Napoleon, bull-fights, high combs, mantillas, gipsy dancers, all the hodge-podge of mental pictures one gains of an unknown foreign land. Visiting a new country is like falling in love, much of the same tense expectancy, hope, lurking adventure.

The immigration officials in natty gray uniforms came, not in a swift motor boat but in a long gray shell, rowed with the masterful precision of a Yale racing crew.

It took so long to dig my trunk out of the hold—I was really booked for Santander—I had to hire a special boat to get ashore. By then the sun was out bright. It coruscated in silver sheen on the windows of the town. Coruña seems all of glass. For all the harbor houses are built with wide miradors; the flower-filled corridors along the front of each story are enclosed in glass from paved floor to ceiling.

An animated little town! The fresh thrill of it abides with me still after eighteen years. The fishing boats, with their faded sails, their red and blue and yellow nets, rode the swells in a corner of the harbor. Women fish-venders clattered along in wooden shoes, long many-colored skirts flaring wide, blouses

richly embroidered. On their bright kerchief-covered heads they carried baskets of fresh sardines laid neatly on green leaves.

In the customs I was overwhelmed by a swarm of vividly dressed peasant women crying out to handle my baggage. Most were tall, bright-eyed, with apple-red cheeks, aglow with health. A statuesque girl seized hold of my two hundred pound trunk and with an easy gesture lifted it to her shoulder and walked gracefully down the street with it to my *pensión*. Such a buxom lass could throw me over the fence as easily as a dead turnip stalk. If only for the sake of my ribs, I vowed not to make love to any of these Amazonian darlings.

My bags were shoved into a little wicker carriage, with vivid cretonne curtains and cloth-covered seats, behind two cream-colored ponies, and I rattled merrily through the narrow cobbled streets.

At the customs, in the streets, everywhere were the inevitable Guardias Civiles in pairs—gray uniforms, narrow red stripe down the trousers, yellow criss-cross cartridge belts, guns with yellow shoulder strap, shining rectangular black hats—snappy-looking fellows. But the baggage women and fishwomen guyed them unmercifully and spitefully. Spain those days was already turbulent; the guards were cordially hated.

But they stood dignified, portentous, apparently indifferent to every jibe. The self-important American cop would immediately have dragged such flouters of his dignity off to jail. But haughty Spanish indifference at once set the Guardia Civil in a realm quite apart from common folk.

Spain—a decadent country! My a priori conceptions were shattered from the first moment. They were all school-book propaganda derived from our Spanish War victory. These

hardy people, these marvelous Amazon women, these tough and jostling peasants—they might be poor, ignorant, exploited, their government rotten, their country no longer an empire, but they were men who knew their rights and had dignity; they acted always like free men; they were a sound healthy folk through and through, eager for argument, gay with life, proud and honest.

And so Spain stretched before me! Europe stretched before me! The world was at my feet. Few have been the times my whole life long when I have felt the same upsurge of pure delight in seeing, breathing, living, such boundless faith in the future, such eager anticipation as that first morning in the magical seaport of Coruña.

3

My intention had been to go directly to Madrid. Instead I stayed a week there in Coruña and Santiago de Compostela and would have stayed a month, a year, a lifetime—except undoubtedly there were equally marvelous things ahead. I had to see everything, do everything, try everything.

The hard benches of third-class in Spain! My bones carried the glad bruises of them for miles and days and weeks and months. I was a Columbus returned to the Old World, feverishly bent on discovering everything. My own enthusiasm now led me to something of an understanding of the excitement, emotional uplift, boundless energy and fearlessness of Spain's Conquistadores. I was a Cortés, a Pizarro come back to test my arms—against the hordes of petty innkeepers.

I did not consider myself a tourist. I meant to *live* in Spain. I had learned to speak a fair Spanish in Mexico and soon I was lisping my "c's" and had swung into the two-time rhythm of the mother-country's tongue. Spaniards might consider me an alien, but I felt at home.

Simpler people, at least, didn't consider me any more of a stranger than anyone hailing from another region of Spain. After all, the Basques are as remote in language and general culture from the Andalusians as the Finnish from the French.

On a hill overlooking Avila, an aged peasant chatting with me said: "You aren't from around here, are you?"

I told him I was from Aragón.

He sat thoughtfully for a while, finally said, "Yes, the Aragonese do talk like that." (Or was he being polite?)

A peasant woman on the Lisbon express asked me where I was from.

"California."

"How many stations till you get there?"

In Málaga, despite my Spanish lisping, a shopkeeper, with the canniness of all seaport folk, said, "You're Mexican, aren't you? I can tell from your provincialisms."

Such incidents were like being decorated.

I rode across Spain. I reveled in the Gothic wonder of Burgos, and in Madrid found myself installed in a little *pensión* overlooking a small tree-shaded plaza, not far from the Calle de Atocha, where the buildings of centuries leaned over the sunny streets. And Madrid in early September certainly was sunny—it was sweltering.

After a time I found a two room place on the Calle de Velázquez. There—between excursions to other parts of the country—I worked hard to revise my book on Mexico. I had expected to do some articles to help out financially, but the writing of the book dragged on. It seemed like culling over a long dead world to be writing about Mexico when I was here in Spain. But I had to satisfy myself that, for the time being, it was the very best I could do.

When I did finish it, I didn't have the least idea how to market it. I made a likely list of publishers and shipped it off

to my mother in California, asking her to send it out. Then I proceeded to forget about Mexico and look more intently at Spain.

4

Madrid was a round of little restaurants, food floating in olive oil, free wine with the *table d'hôte*. A favorite eating place was the Oro del Rhín. A favorite haunt Sundays was the Rastro or market. In those days it had many treasures: Persian shawls, Venetian lamps, castanets, costumes, old crucifixes, paintings, handiwork of all sorts—for a pittance. Years later, when I went back, such things had become almost nonexistent and sold for very high prices.

At the far end, the Rastro trailed off to a spectacle of human misery rarely equaled: half-naked hags, squatting over piles of rags and rusty nails, their whole stock worth only a few pennies, trying to make a living selling to those almost as poor as themselves but who could still afford a patch for threadbare clothes. Spain was not all romance. It was one of the worst exploited lands in Europe.

Madrid itself was far different from Coruña or a hundred other thriving provincial centers where life was sane and strong. It was a decadent bureaucratic city, sitting like a dark spider sucking the lifeblood out of the nation. A grand imperial city, like many such, it did not entirely justify itself; it was a bright parasite, remnant of feudalism and empire, but living off the rest of Spain, no longer setting a true cultural pattern, full of drunk officers and sinecure bureaucrats flaunting mistresses.

The military elements, ever in evidence, adhered to the chocolate soldier tradition. Never have I seen so many flamboyant uniforms, so many colored stripes, so many scarlet jackets and blue trousers, so many gaudy plumes, braid, epaulettes, and so much vapid vainglory and glitter. It is this privileged strutting class, so devoid of real patriotism, which now—as I write—has

betrayed the country to foreign foes, is sticking the blade of treachery into the nation.

In the provinces one saw a few fine priests; in Madrid, they were mostly corrupt, often bleary-eyed, drunkenly slobbering over vulgar women in public places. The city was one vast brothel. And yet if one did not kneel right down in the muddy street when the Host passed in numerous public religious processions, one was dragged off to jail—this in the year 1920. The fall of the monarchy was not to occur for eleven years yet, but the signs of decay, futility, abuses, were all present. One knew that the monarchy would not, could not, have long to live.

Another horrible feature of Madrid's decay was the lottery. The miserable lower strata put all their hope in that dishonest institution. All night before the drawing, Madrid streets were filled with howling drunks, celebrating the fortune sure to be theirs. The night following, they filled the city with ugly uproar again to drown their disappointment.

Despite ostentatious spending, Madrid had no attractive night life. There was nothing important on the stage. The Eslava Theatre was putting on famous dramas, considered dangerous and daring, by Ibsen, Shaw and others; but the texts were altered so as not to offend Spanish sensibilities, especially in religious matters. Benavente, though later to receive the Nobel Prize and still later to stand out for his brave convictions during the Civil War, was never more than a second-rater and in 1920 was already beginning to run down.

The most exciting spectacle was La Pastora, a Spanish gipsy dancer, supreme in her genre, in the little Roma Theatre just off the Puerta del Sol. Night after night I went to see her.

The Spaniards and negroes are the two people on earth that know how to dance most superbly. With them dancing is an essential cultural expression, as close to each individual as bread

and babies—read the essay by Havelock Ellis in his *The Soul of Spain*.

As for regular night life, there were a few sordid cafés and dives that got started about two in the morning. The *Magdalena* was a stuffy place loaded with smoke and prostitutes. One pushed aside heavy red entrance curtains into a babel of noise and spilled drinks. Raised stalls, à la Wild West films, ranged along either side of the dance floor and tables, beyond which was the stage. The entertainment was grosser than even Minsky's, the chief attraction being a bloated woman who did a strip act, sang in a cracked voice and wiggled her rear. In moments of great enthusiasm or on holidays sometimes she yanked off everything. But the place had color and provided amusing types from the city slicker to the leather jackets of Navarro and the flat-crown hats and tight black velvet jackets of the Sevillans.

What was lacking in entertainment in Madrid was made up for by the opera, particularly good that year. A Spanish-German company put on the entire *Nibelungenlied*. But of *Götterdämmerung*, I have only the vaguest notions, though motifs ring in my head clamorously to this day.

For that noon, with the poet from Mexico (then in Spain with the runaway Blanche), I lunched in a little, tiled, cellar restaurant. A whole bottle of heady Valdepeñas wine was generously served with the meal. Presently I was testing myself with the sidewalk cracks.

Heltschmidt and I became enthusiastic about Valdepeñas, undoubtedly the finest wine produced. In his room we finished up a spot of wine he still had in his demijohn, then refilled it in a wine cellar with Valdepeñas.

Back in his place, we philosophized over Valdepeñas, got a little sick, and finally went in a daze to the opera—a party of five. I am certain I did not cut a creditable figure, and the opera

itself, except for those startling motifs, remains only a vague haze in my mind.

Some years later, reading Harry Frank's *Tramping Through Spain*, I was amused to note his experiences when visiting the town of Valdepeñas. On the road he had picked up two Spanish anarchists and in Valdepeñas itself they indulged in a bottle—quite sufficient to prime his two companions for speechmaking. Off they went to the plaza and made burning harangues. Frank, if I remember rightly, also made a speech, I presume about democracy. Naturally they were promptly dragged off to jail.

I met Frank years later in Mexico—a tall, dry, silent fellow, quite charming, seemingly little like his own picture of himself.

5

Above all else Madrid was the Prado. It was my first real glimpse of great art. I had gotten a great deal out of the Metropolitan in New York when studying at Columbia University, but I still lacked background.

Though my mother had dreamed of my being a painter, without herself having had the opportunity to know much about art, California in my boyhood was a raw uncultured place. Even now art there is mostly considered just a snobbish interest for busy women at the menopause seeking culture.

I can still remember the furor over the nude *September Morn*, the discussions of which washed over into our house. The burning question was, not whether it was good art, but whether the painter was justified in painting a nude woman. Some said that if she was in a natural setting that way, it was all right, nothing indecent was intended. As a matter of fact, most people thought that particularly banal and atrocious painting was good art; but of course ethical considerations came first.

In these days of nudism, bathing beauty contests, anatomy

revealed in sun-suits, Hollywood artists seeking publicity in bathtubs, and group chorus in three roses and a smile, such considerations seem strangely remote. And yet, if a ballot were taken today, I suppose that forty million or more people in these supposedly enlightened United States would consider that the nude human body is immoral. Perhaps if the Puritans had not helped to defraud us of our artistic instincts, we might have been spared much later vulgarity.

Now, in Madrid, I wandered through the Prado day after day almost like a somnambulist. Velásquez, Murillo, Ribera, Zurbarán, Claudio Coello, El Greco, gradually the Italian Renaissance: Rafael, Titian, Tintoretto, Lorenzo de Credi, Perugino, Botticelli, Fra Angelico, Ghirlandaio, Andrea del Sarto. Velásquez' pictures of Spanish *bobos*, his canvases of Vulcan, the Bachanal, the Surrender of Breda, *Las Meninas*, are superb things that live with one for life, but more and more I began to prefer the half-mad mystic sublimity of El Greco and the peasant naïveté of Goya and the grotesque satire of his *caprichos*. But above all, El Greco, whose canvases flow with inner fire, a peculiar inner luminosity—tower up like a pale, quivering, icy flame, the supreme Gothic aspiration in painting.

Goya got closer to the homely life of Spain than any other painter. Murillo is too dulcet, too superficial, but Goya's scenes of rural life go as deep as the rooted lives of the peasants themselves, and some bitterness, some cosmic pain at the root of his bright flowers give even his most bucolic and lyric canvases a subtle paradox, universality and vigor.

And so in the Prado I walked through the doors of a new world, new life, something neither time nor adversity can ever take from me.

ALFONSO AT COURT

I WENT TO AVILA, A GRANITE calendar of sieges and disasters and victories. Crenelated brown battlements, twisted alleys, jolly evening promenades, flashing eyes, buzzing wine-shops, grave, elegant wedding processions—shadowy memories, like a hyacinth page from Proust. The actual life of Avila those days seemed, at bright noon, quite petty, the town poverty-stricken and dirty, but as the day slid into the softer hours, an ancient beauty stirred and took on flesh and lived again. The city remains with me now with a faint perfume of something delicately lovely, something traced through with a spirit of grace—almost like an old lady rustling in lavender taffeta.

Segovia's walls, I found, made the city like a gray battleship in a saffron sea of barren hills under blazing sun—the town most beloved by Zuloaga, the painter; and there I visited his uncle's famous pottery and tile shop in an old abandoned church of San Juan, a half-crumbled Romanesque building overlooking the Arroyo of Alamillos. For many years I carried around with me a tile from there, depicting one of the scenes from *Don Quixote*.

Many hours I spent seated on the hill under the gray Roman aqueduct, which, though so massive, seems to leap lightly across the valley like a flying borzoi. The lower tile-roofed town, under the aqueduct's silver-brown belly, between its lofty legs, looks like jagged chunks of rock taffy.

In the Escorial, I wandered under the gray melancholy

towers and slate roofs, through the endless patios, beautiful chapels, looked at manuscripts in glass cases with their Arabic tracery of soft ultramarine on mauve, miniature beauty worthy of great walls. There was more of Greco—the big blue figure, *San Mauricio*, painted from the back, looking over the battle-field toward the faint horizon light of aching mystery. More of Velásquez, Paolo Veronese's *Annunciation*, Titian, Tintoretto, Giordano.

I remember odd little impressions: the low, frosty sun over a gabled wall, tangled in trees; schoolboys kicking a football; monks moving their lips as they walked, heads buried in religious books; a diptych of ivory; an importunate guide with a hole in the elbow of his coat; a big wine cart, smelling of crushed grapes; an old brass sextant; the leather chair on which the King used to rest his wounded leg.

Down a long granite staircase and down black marble, I descended to the Pantheon of Kings, the octagonal vault, black and gold, somber and heavy, with tiers of dark marble sarcophagi gilded with the names of vanished monarchs. One bore the name of Alfonso XIII and another that of the Queen; two others were still unlabeled, waiting future sovereigns. I remember wondering, even those early days, whether Alfonso's bones would ever rest there.

In Aranjuez I found the best picture of all the decayed glories of imperial Spain, the Casa del Labrador, the Louis XV furniture, gold clocks doing stunts, Goebblins, Baroque porcelain rooms, Moorish rooms, Pompeiian rooms, knickknacks from every clime. One can stand only so much of that sort of admirable junk. I was glad to dash on to Toledo.

It rises in tiers from its great, brown double gates, the great cathedral and its massive Alcázar—a proud Gibraltar once carved against the dry air of the central mesa, now prostrate in the bloody dust of civil war tragedy—a city beautiful among

the cities of the earth, a great warehouse of all the arts, the races, the cultures, the battles of Spain, and still the home of a sturdy upright folk.

There I spent a night in the famous Posada de la Sangre, where much of the famous *Don Quixote* was written, an humble inn at the head of a steep street near the Zocadover, still frequented as in Cervantes' day by simple muleteers and ranchers, its patio and animal stalls below, its upper guest rooms with their battered doors facing a balcony above arcades, all with a smell of straw and manure, animal sweat and humble cooking. What a great treat this would have been for my grandfather, whose one beloved book was *Don Quixote*. Rebel artillery have razed it.

Toledo provided the second truly great thrill of my coming to Europe. The Greco museum, with its twelve paintings of the Apostles, is sheer concentrated glory. If one were to travel to Europe merely to visit the Greco room in Toledo, then turned around and sailed straight home again, one's trip would have been worth the time, effort and expense. I wonder, since the violence that has swept over that imperial city, whether those canvases are still intact.

More of Greco's paintings, in his earlier style, strongly influenced by the Venetian school, hung in a little chapel down on the saddle of a hill, weirdly beautiful pallid things, like the flame of a great passion in a frail body. And in another church, unfortunately in bad light, hangs his great masterpiece, *The Burial of Count Orgaz*: the dignitaries of the time in black and lace, the golden robes of the bishop, the pallid face of the dead man keying in with white lace cuffs, the sweeping blue above with its galaxy of angels and its rightly harmonizing white clouds.

I spent many hours in the House of Greco—so it is designated—just the house he should have lived in, still cloaked in

the spell of his genius. Or perhaps it is merely a house picked out by canny Toledans for over-romantic tourists.

To me, most of all, Toledo means Greco. It is a great city, stamped with the labor of Rome, of early Spain, of Visigoth and Moor, of English and French, of Pope and Archbishop. Hercules, they claim, was its founder. It has known Spain's greatest: the Cid; Rabbi Ben Ezra; Ferdinand and Isabella; Juana, the Mad; De la Vega; and imperial Charles V. But its crowning glory is the work of Cervantes and of El Greco—two of the greatest figures in the history of all mankind.

To have seen Toledo and its ways is to know much of the secret of *Don Quixote* and its power; it is to know much of the source of El Greco's inspiration and his soaring imagination. There is revealed the secret of his haunting skies, his vast panoramas, his apex-like compositions. His own painting of medieval Toledo synthesizes his emotions, his strange fluidity, his defiance of obvious dimensions and his sense of the tragic and dramatic. *Toledo in Storm*, with its bare, stark, sun-baked hills, its high Chinese-like walls, its lofty spans across the Tagus, the sky-piercing cathedral, the massive Alcázar, its hill-clustering houses and winding alleys—all stretching up like some eternal desire for glory and knowledge, against a wild sky of dark clouds and tinted light and pale horizon green, is a record of the strange unity, the pragmatic force and mad idealism of Spain. It is a plastic welding of the mad knight and his humorous humble servitor.

2

I had come to Toledo a bit weary after two weeks of day and night nursing of a person with intestinal fever, and after loafing around the Aranjuez gardens, had taken a little side-train. I arrived in Toledo after dark and lugged my own suitcase up the long winding hill to the Zocadover.

The little *pensión* just off the square, recommended to me

by an artist friend, had no accommodations, so I left my bag there and made the rounds of the hotels and *pensiones* but could find no room. Toledo, on the morrow, was expecting a visit from the Kings of Belgium and Spain and their respective consorts. In desperation, I tackled a Guardia Civil, told him if I didn't find a place I was coming over to the barracks to sleep.

He scratched his head and finally led me through dirty back alleys up three flights of grimy stairs to a fourth-rate *pensión*, where a soldier in blue and red uniform sat sottishly drinking wine.

But the slatternly woman in charge merely eyed me suspiciously. Nonplused, I drifted back to the first *pensión* where I begged them to find at least a corner to put me up.

They then confessed that a police edict had been posted that all innkeepers would be held personally responsible for their guests and their acts during the visit of their Majesties. No one was willing to take in a guest he didn't know.

The *pensión* finally gave me a little room with windows over the servants' patio. Tired, run down anyway, I was sleeping like a log when, about three in the morning, I was startled awake by a terrific pounding.

"Open for the police!"

A drunken officer stood there, a battery of policemen and secret-service men behind him. He demanded to see my passport.

He examined it closely, looked me over in an arrogant manner and told me haughtily that fortunately for me it was all right.

I demanded to know why he couldn't come around at a decent hour. I had heard that Spaniards were courteous.

He immediately apologized at length, but . . . superior orders . . . They were looking for dangerous characters, had instructions to investigate every outsider.

The next day an Austrian terrorist with a bomb in his suitcase was arrested in a barber shop. He answered my description perfectly.

3

Crowned heads rested uneasily those days. Undoubtedly Alfonso saw the handwriting on the wall, the growing forces that twelve years later were to tumble him into the dust-heap. His wedding had been featured by a frightful bombing. Recent attempts had been made on his life. Premier Dato was assassinated shortly after this. All Spain was in a disturbed condition. Several army revolts had been suppressed. The Moroccan colonial disasters had had repercussions. General Berenguer was soon to be put on trial. A parliamentary investigation was showing up army and civilian graft, inefficiency and general corruption; day by day the trail of disclosure was leading closer to the immaculate robes of his Majesty himself.

In Toledo next day, their Majesties rode by in state, but the police kept us *hoi polloi* at a great distance. In Madrid, later, an army colonel got me a pass to the Palace for the Queen Mother's birthday.

But even with a pass, I had to get by three batteries of officials; at one landing I was frisked, and had to leave my cane at a desk.

Along the medieval marble hallway fantastic chocolate opera guards, in white and red, stood at rigid attention—unusually tall fellows with pikes or huge medieval battle-axes. We guests, about fifty of us, were allowed to stand behind these while the Royal procession passed.

At the head of it came a group of secret-service men, eyeing all those invited with hard scrutiny; next, another fantastically uniformed corps; then the King, Queen and the Queen Mother, with maids of waiting and court attendants; then another phalanx of guards.

Alfonso was said to be very brave and manly, a reckless motorist and inveterate sportsman, but he actually looked scared to death, his face chalky, his eyes shifty; his adenoidal, drooping, nervous mouth gave him a rat-like expression. Nearly a head shorter than the Queen, a stately, calm English woman, rather beautiful in a frigid way, he seemed pale and insignificant.

But the disease of haemophilia, with which his male children are afflicted, is from the Queen's side, not his. There were rumors that he taunted her bitterly about this, especially as he had had normal children by one of his mistresses, the ex-wife of a Mexican bull-fighter.

After the King and the court and more guards had passed, we were allowed to trail after them into a little chapel where services were held. After a bit, we were brusquely herded out ahead of the royal party.

4

I had one other curious experience with the police. Regulations required all resident foreigners to take out police identification cards. As I had a Mexican passport, but intended to apply for an American passport, I had delayed with this formality beyond the time-limit.

One day a gendarme stopped me just outside where I was living—on Conde de Romanones Street, to demand my identification card.

I pawed through my clothes, thinking fast. I told him that perhaps I had left it in my other suit. If he would be so kind as to accompany me upstairs to the fifth floor, I would be glad to show it to him.

I had expected him to pass the matter over, but with much grumbling, he plodded along with me. Now he would be really put out at having come up so many flights on a wild-geese chase. I saw myself in the *comisería* behind bars.

By the fourth landing, I had hit upon a bold expedient. I ushered him in with a flourish, opened my trunk and pulled out my Columbia University diploma. With a magniloquent gesture I unrolled it before his nose and haughtily pointed to the seal and Nicholas Murray Butler's signature, which, if not as bellicose as such a great man's should be or the present fateful moment required, worked miracles.

The gendarme promptly drew himself up, saluted, turned on his heel and went out.

Nicholas Murray has always stood in so well with just the right people!

CHAPTER X

OIL AND WINE

MORE AND LONGER TRIPS TOOK me further into the interior. More hard third-class benches, a long, wild bus trip in a driving rain over a mountain road to catch the Lisbon express, another night spent on a chair in front of a railway junction fire to wait for a delayed train, strange inns, strange adventures, strange folk. One gloomy, freezing morning I sat bundled in a third-class coach, waiting for the departure of the train. The train-hands tossed in a long metal tank of hot water to heat the compartment. It was promptly monopolized by a fat man in a greasy plaid muffler and a black *boina* on his bald pate.

Having been a volunteer nurse to a drawn-out case of intestinal fever, I had become so germ conscious that for nearly a month I drank only wine, beer or bottled water. By the time I reached Sevilla, I was so thirsty, I seized the pitcher in my hotel room and without even bothering to pour out a glass, gulped down the contents. Immediately after, the first thing my eyes rested upon in my Baedeker was a warning of the special dangers of the water of Sevilla. But nothing happened, and having found all my care and my carelessness both so ironically flouted, thereafter I took pot luck with the rest of the population.

The neat little *pensión* in Placenza, with its fine food and wine, was run by two deep-bowing, bearded twin-brothers, always in Tux, who did everything in unison. Quaintly shy peasant folk came dogging into town in their small beribboned

hats that looked like wicker bird-cages, in their odd blouses and tunics. A foreigner really frightened some Placenza folk. In one back street, at sight of me, a girl of about fifteen dropped the two copper jars she was carrying right in the middle of the street and, bare legs flashing, ran screaming into the house.

Placenza was a dilapidated, easygoing untouristed place, but when viewed from the Jerte River or certain parts of the Promenade has one of the most impressive profiles in Spain. The rising tiers of tiled roofs among gnarled olive and fruit orchards and clambering vines, the great medieval aqueduct with its fifty arches, the double line of walls, punctuated with tower after tower, all rise up majestically to the high-flung cathedral.

I went on through Cáceres. In the well-dressed Sunday promenade I felt shabby and unshaven, conscious suddenly of being a complete outsider, a foreigner, an intruder. I caught an afternoon train going south across semi-desolate Extremadura.

Near the frontier I encountered mountain-folk, dressed in animal skins and with wild uncombed hair, who spoke a guttural, unintelligible dialect—Celt-Iberic tribes never touched by two thousand years of civilization, more remote from it even than backwoods populations in Alabama, Georgia or Tennessee. Spain still had four thousand villages inaccessible to all wheel transportation.

The place I liked best in Extremadura was Mérida, with its old Roman bridge stepping across the Guadiana River, its high aqueduct stepping across field and roof, its well-preserved Roman amphitheater dating back to the days of Agrippa. Today Mérida is a provincial, poverty-stricken town, quite unblest by the breath of progress; its important history belies its down-at-the-heels present; it was a significant center in old Roman days—and many times since.

The hotel was expensive; the poorer hostelries were suspicious of me; but I finally persuaded them to take me in at a

little *posada* where the peasants put up. There I cooked my meal over their fires in the patio where the country folk sleep wrapped up in ponchos beside their animals—as in Cervantes' Posada de la Sangre in Toledo. The garrulous old fellow who led me to my neatly whitewashed room and purchased food for me, showed me how to manipulate the ropes to the one window, a high little square with a wooden door—"so that you can close it when you go to sleep."

Into my blood still mounts the distant call of those golden Méridan sunsets and warm moonlit nights over the shallow river, where the muleteers, fording into town across the sandbars, were silhouetted against bright clouds looking like children's party dresses, all the bright ghost light on Roman and medieval tower, the laughter of women in vivid peasant clothes, the sheen of copper pots on kitchen walls.

What was I doing in these remote parts? What was I seeking? Something in myself? Some clue to the world and the universe? It would be hard for me to say. Chance, almost, had thrown me abroad; curiosity kept me going, a boundless lust for new sights and more knowledge.

Youth should be spent in eager curiosity. Perhaps it need not have a formulated purpose, perhaps is all the better for having no such purpose. Youth should be tossed to life without too many reservations.

Accident, plus thirst for knowledge, plus a psychological twist, plus my passion to write, had flung me on strange ways. And yet the flirt of a shawl in Mérida is no more mysterious than the crook of the white arm of the butcher's daughter in Podunk, Arkansas. But out of such gestures one can arrive at the whole secret of a social system, a people's psychology, and perhaps also learn the secrets of one's own locked life. All experience knits and knits into a pattern of understanding and purpose. Each straw that blooms has its place in the scheme

and who knows but what the mere glimpse of it may be worth, as the days spin by, more than all the crown jewels? And the quickest way to know oneself, if one ever does, is to travel around the world.

2

Extremadura, of which Mérida is the capital, is one of the most poverty-stricken backward sections of Spain. But fascinating. It has a hardy history. From there came both Cortés and swine-herd Pizarro; in fact the Extremeños and Basques took the lead in imperial adventuring. To this day the Extremeño, a taciturn, suspicious, in-growing soul, is the muleteer par excellence. He loads up his mules with his handicrafts and sets off silently for strange parts. He will be found, his wares and burro or mule beside him, squatting in every city in Spain; and, even though he does not know French, along the open spaces beside the Seine in Paris. He sits there patiently, munching on a piece of dried cheese, taking an occasional swig of wine, till all his goods are sold. Taciturn, rarely does he strike up a conversation unless he meets a fellow provincial. Always he goes back to his native soil. He never becomes cosmopolitan, rarely gets to know outsiders, remains suspicious of them.

This rooted, self-sufficient quality of Spain interested me. I sought for the clues to it. As I traveled, I read: Spanish history, Fitzmaurice's history of Spanish literature, the Cid (the first hunger strike on record, six centuries ago), Calderón, Lope de Vega, Valera, Galdos, Blasco Ibañez, Pío Baroja, Valle Inclán, Benavente, Espronceda. I liked the anecdote of the romantic poet: how, when forced to flee into exile, sailing into the harbor of Lisbon, he threw his last dollar into the sea so as not to enter such a magnificent city with so little money. *Don Quixote*, re-read after my experiences with Spanish inns and their humble folk, yielded up more of its imperishable secrets. For the first time I got the fine rhetorical swing of Cervantes' style,

that limpid ease that few other writers in any language have ever equaled.

I went on to Sevilla and Granada and Córdoba. Granada on its proud hills, under its snow-capped mountains, is almost as magnificent as Toledo; "handsome city of gipsies," the brave martyred Lorca calls it, and there, night is night:

. . . *Noche platinoche*
Noche, que noche nochera.

. . . Silvernigh night
Night, night within the night.

None of my compulsory school reading had given me more pleasure than Washington Irving's *Alhambra*, his legends of the old palace of the Moors. I read it again now as I wandered through those ancient halls and marveled at those incrustated tiles, those slender columns—tent-poles converted into fairy wands—those intricate traceries like the magic of dimly envisaged religion of the desert set to music, the plainness and emptiness of the desert filled with the fire of desire, architecture fretted like the endless wind-blown sands, heated by the lonely imagination to a molten glow and blown by reverence into the finespun glass of intricate complexity till it is kin to the invisible structure of the snowflake; and thus the cycle of nature's processes is linked to the infinite by fine unbreakable strands. And this, too, told part of the story of why I was there.

Beggars were everywhere—a tradition of Granada. They flock along the approaches to the Alhambra. You deny them at one corner; they crawl up to you at the next. Heritage of imperialism and its decline, these malformed children of the hidalgos were paying for the sins of their fathers. Here were the great-great-grandchildren of those who strode across new continents—mayhap as a century or so hence, the descendants of Wellington or Lord Clive or Hastings or Raleigh may be

found holding out their grimy paws along the peaceful green canals of Stratford on Avon.

But in Spain even beggars are proud. In Granada I photographed an unusually picturesque gipsy. When I proffered her a peseta, she drew herself up haughtily.

"I have been photographed by the King of England himself, by the King of Spain, the Duke of Alba, and the Lord of Hot Potatoes," and she rattled off a list of dignitaries. "None gave me less than a *duro*."

"Unfortunately I am not a king or a duke or even a train-conductor. A peseta or nothing."

She took nothing and preserved her imperishable dignity.

On the country road below the Alhambra along the Rio Darro are caves and huts, among cactus and false pepper trees, where the gipsies live, a world with customs quite apart from those of the near-by city. There one afternoon I saw a powerful male whipping his woman. She arched her body for the blows as though they were a delightful caress—a complimentary masochism and sadism that, perhaps instinct with the race and the sexes, is possibly not without its peculiar joys and compensations.

As I half paused, the man turned a dark lowering countenance upon me and lifted his hand in such a menacing gesture that I kept on.

Sevilla is another great city, with its lofty Giralda overlooking tiled roofs and the silver links of the Guadalquivir—a city and river great in the history of empire. Here in Sevilla I visited the great seat of trade with the New World. From here the golden galleons went forth to risk the English and Dutch buccaneers; here was the administration for three centuries of the colonial empire; here is the famous Casa de las Indias. Sevilla is the *tierra* of Velásquez, Murillo (his canvases stud the

walls on every hand), Lope de Rueda, Herrera. Rioja, Alberto Lista.

What tricks memory has! I conned over the old lore of Sevilla; I traced its every stone; yet how few of the precious details remain, unless I refresh the old time by references; how little one can recall of one's exact emotions!

Little incidents do flash back: stumbling over some lumber in the dark when coming down from the Giralda, after staying there too late in order to watch the sunset, how I cracked my shin and skinned my hand and cursed furiously; a lace and ruffles neophyte in the cathedral whining at me for *cinc sous* (later I saw him gambling with dominoes in a central café); the blue tiles of the Casa del Pilar and a narrow-eyed, half Moorish woman who showed me over the place; the arches of the Patio de las Doncellas in the Alcázar; the fine Cristobal Alemán stained glass in the cathedral; an argument with a museum guard who wished to send me the whole length of the museum via the arrows when I merely wished to see the last room of paintings; a fisherman unloading his silver-scaled fish from a dory; avenues and avenues of orange trees; a glimpse of a dormer window and a girl pulling on her stockings; a little café in the Calle de Serpientes, full of smoke, red plush, black *boinas* and loud talk.

My mind those days was tinged with a lurking bitterness. Some oranges I swiped out of the royal gardens seemed almost symbolic: they were bitter beyond eating. It suddenly seemed to me that my reveling in departed glories was far from satisfactory as a means of filling my time. I felt the need to get my claws on the real throat of life. One cannot forever live like a leech on medieval art and vanished greatness.

CHAPTER XI

ITALY

ITALY BECKONED. I WAS ANXIOUS to get there. The country, on the eve of revolution, promised to be the second great turning point, after Russia, in the history of post-war Europe. Here was a chance to be in the thick of history in the making.

Hardly had we left the grand imperial city of Barcelona on our way to Genoa, a more mystic and poetical city, mother of the seven seas, than the present sea—the Mediterranean—kicked up its heels mightily. Despite previous boastings of immunity, I was horribly seasick—an ironical humbling, for here, on this traditionally calm inland lake, the ancient Romans rowed nonchalantly along in their little open triremes and today the tourist companies put out bright-colored Mediterranean scenes of vacationers lolling under shady awnings enjoying this sea. I spent two days wailing for the damn' boat to sink.

What sad impressions one often gains from one's first contact with a foreign country! One comes with elation and hope, sympathy, eagerness, but invariably immigration and customs officials do their best to destroy these sentiments. In Spain, at Coruña, the officials, looking particularly for tobacco, a government monopoly, had ransacked my baggage in more minute fashion than I was to suffer until years later in the Soviet Union, but had been so polite and friendly I was not overly annoyed. Here in Genoa, the shabby immigration official looked at my Mexican passport and decided I must be a German, for many

stranded exiles had utilized the passports of many nations to get back home.

Brazenly, in front of everybody, he held out his hand and said, *Trinkgeld*. Often in Spain my tips had been haughtily refused, but the outstretched palm, I was to discover, was the typical gesture of petty Italian officialdom, in fact of most of the nation, of the taxi-driver, hotel-keeper, everyone with whom you came in contact. You tipped the post-office clerk who registered your letter, you tipped the railway employee who checked your trunk, otherwise it got lost in a corner. Victor Hugo even accused Italian innkeepers of charging you for the fleas on your dog. They had not changed.

But not yet aware of the grand national industry of petty gyping, I protested vigorously. Nonchalantly the official laid my passport aside, not stamping it.

I tossed over ten lire, at that day's exchange about forty cents.

The official beamed, at once stamped my passport. A few minutes later, when I was in the customs, the immigration gyp and a friend rushed enthusiastically into a wharf café for a drink.

One is always exhilarated after stepping off a boat. Life has more vivid coloring. One is alert to people, colors, sounds, sights. When stealing a glance at a handsome girl in a white sweater and tam, I found myself running into a stately buxom woman in black silk and lace. She was holding up a jeweled hand and warning me, with an amused smile, not to run into her: "*Piano, piano signore.*" *Piano* was the first Italian word I learned.

The first Italian word Dostoevsky learned in Italy was "*niente*"—"nothing." Starving in a cheap room, but expecting money from Russia, every day he hastened down to the post-office only to hear the lugubrious "*niente, niente,*" in singsong

voice with a mournful shake of the head and a slight clicking of the lips.

The next Italian word I must have learned was "*pazenza*"—"patience." Every Italian is forever telling you "*pazenza*" when you ask them to do something or if you object to anything. They are always telling you of their own great *pazenza*. Yet no people on earth has less *pazenza* than the modern Italian.

The stock appellations which people apply to themselves rarely describe what they are. Mexican politicians are always designated in their campaign literature as *honrado*, honest and honorable, but no breed on the earth is less *honrado*. The great American words are "democracy" and "individualism." I wonder if we are as democratic or as individualistic as we think we are.

2

In Milan, with the help of Spanish and a pencil, I rented a room, temporarily, in a rather swank *pensione*. Determined to get into things as quickly as possible, I decided not to speak or read English until I had mastered Italian. For nearly a year I read only Italian newspapers and books, talked only Italian. Even when I encountered an American, I would reply in bad Italian.

In the *pensione* dining-room, per custom, I bowed ceremoniously from the waist, with a celluloid smile, at all my neighbors. A French count, with a big black beard and an enormous family, was an artist who spent all his free time running after prostitutes. A fat American opera singer, with an infinite number of gaudy dresses, swept in every day with a long-haired Italian gigolo pianist, over whom she fawned and smirked coyly. A pretty, worried girl, very trimly dressed, always brought her Pekinese to her table and cut up tidbits for him. She picked some fellow up off the street, had a drinking party in her room

and was ill for two days. Later I saw her in Florence, still thin and worried.

Frau Hilda Braun hated the thin girl with the dog, apparently because of repeated arguments as to which table belonged to which, although the real reason was probably very much deeper.

Frau Braun, a stately, voluble blonde, was in Italy pending divorce proceedings in Switzerland. She loved to gossip and by tipping the red-headed chambermaid with the chronic cognac breath, she got the low-down on everybody, then passed it on to me or anyone else who would listen.

Frau Braun, obviously in straitened circumstances, watched every penny, never ordered tea or Kaffeeeklatsch, but ate oranges sneaked out from the dining-room. She ironed her clothes in her room. To make up for miserable reality, she always acted and talked in the grand manner. She would not, she said, use her good clothes, of which she claimed to have an abundance, in just an ordinary *pensione*; though that triumph, of course, no true woman could have forgone. Very vain of her rings, she was always pulling them on and off, rearranging them on different fingers to see in which combination they looked most effective.

Enamored of some tiny Mexican gold coins I had—six of the little two pesos “Carranza tears”—she insisted on buying them. I finally sold her four, total cost eight pesos, though I had been offered more and really wanted to keep them. But before paying me, Frau Braun, no gold-brick lady, had them weighed and tested by a jeweler, and figured the exchange of eight Mexican pesos in Italian lire down to the exact centesimo.

One waitress in the *pensione*, Monna, a sweet, unsophisticated country girl but extraordinarily beautiful, attracted the eye of a silent, dark man in the corner, who every meal sulked behind his newspaper. He always said things to Monna that made her

blush. Eventually he gave her an eighty-lire tip, a sum so large it frightened her almost to death.

Though the rules of the house were that all tips should go into a common fund, the major part of which was appropriated by the management, on Frau Braun's advice Monna pocketed the eighty lire. Unfortunately, Frau Braun was loose-tongued; Monna was browbeaten into giving up the tip, then thrown out on the street without a cent.

All these folk were sitting indifferently on the edge of an erupting political volcano, few of them even aware of it.

3

The Italian factory seizure movement had already been stopped, not by the Fascist Black Shirts as is generally believed, but because of poor leadership and because of sabotage by the workers of the rest of Europe; also because there was a great lack of raw materials. The Black Shirt movement was only now getting under way. When I arrived in Milan, Mussolini was merely another ambitious leader in the confused political arena, one whose exaggerated antics and demagogic speeches aroused derision in all except the breasts of professional patriots.

But national tragedy was treading close at hand. One could not help being affected by the impending crisis. For instance, I was expecting a bank-draft by mail, but the post-office and telegraph stations were suddenly seized by the *mutilati*, or war-mutilated. I was in a foreign country, not yet speaking the language, stranded, with no money.

Temporarily, I abandoned my baggage at the *pensione* and registered in a cheap hostelry run by María Guazzarini, a more than buxom Neapolitan, with handsome, florid, olive features and a Lady Dido bust. It was a funny, frowsy place.

Though she was constantly telling everyone how dreadfully busy she was—*ma tant' cose da fare*—María did utterly nothing

all day, merely sat—mostly right in the chair where she ate, because it was opposite a large mirror in which she looked at herself vainly all day, though she made little effort to tidy her hair or remove grease spots from her dress.

A queer combination of guests. A military captain, alternately sullen and gay, a bigoted, narrow, sneaking character, always made violent love to María—when her husband was off to work. María endured the captain's attentions complacently, with an arch smile. When hubby was at home the captain always sat utterly silent, his nose buried deep in his newspaper; or, if he did show any animation, asked María harshly to pass him something or paid exaggerated attention to the slatternly waitress, a Lombard type, with stringy blonde hair, thin features, gold teeth, and chin wart with hairs growing out of it.

An exiled Bulgarian, a hard, bitter man who had spent four years in the trenches, loudly bellowed his contempt for the Italians—they were good only for love and poetry. The Bulgar race was great because it was strong and cruel and had only contempt for women. But despite his great contempt, he would sit long after each meal—when the captain was not about—and surreptitiously hold María's hands under the table or play with her knees.

Ferrero was a loud-mouthed, aggressive radical, heavy-set, bold, stubby-handed, who shoveled his food in without niceties or delay. Every morning he would pick up his newspaper, smell it and shout loudly: "It stinks; it has a bourgeois smell." Though often witty, mostly he was bitter, and his violent arguments with the captain when he insulted the army, barely came short of blows. When not arguing about the cause, he was constantly perpetrating Charlie Chaplin slap-stick. He did remarkable tricks with an orange, tumbler and napkin, all the time talking in a loud monologue. He, too, loved to pinch and slap María's buttocks or her arm. She would rub her flesh and yell at him

angrily, but she liked it; her over-sexed body would shudder; soon he, too, would get an arch smile.

A Spanish-Italian, who had served five years in the Spanish-Moroccan campaign, stated instinctive opinions, with undue self-importance, while crumbling his black bread. Leon, a draughtsman, a pale, shy fellow, dressed immaculately in starched shirts, loved rings and laughed with a tinkle. A student, a Chinese-looking type, mostly remained silent with a humorous, tolerant expression on his broad face. White-haired Miss Muirhead—despite her name, Italian—nervous and unbalanced, told us each and all in a confidential aside that she belonged to the aristocracy but was temporarily here due to unfortunate circumstances.

María's husband, a loud-mouthed salesman with a self-assured shoot-'em-all manner, at every meal quarreled loudly with her over their intimate personal affairs. The two of them could not get through a single day without at least one angry flare-up. With blazing countenances and bitter name-calling, they seemed ready to tear each other's eyes out; but each day her husband stalked out coolly, saying good-by pleasantly to all, gaily smiling, as though nothing at all had happened; María would then sit beaming into the mirror or accepting the flirtatious approaches of whoever had time to linger with her.

4

I was not in good health, having had a recurrence of rheumatism from sleeping on damp cement during the War and from subsequent sleeping on the ground in the rain in Mexico, and I was temporarily troubled with a bad cough. Sleep, whenever my legs and hips were not shooting with pains, was very precious to me. At two-thirty one morning, I was awakened by a loud thumping in the courtyard. Angered, I looked out.

Half a dozen men in evening dress were beating a carpet under the stars.

I shouted at them in English and Spanish to cut it out.

They looked up, shouted something back. Everyone laughed uproariously. They resumed their beating.

I emptied a big enameled pitcher of water on their heads.

Angry yells went up. They moved over to the other side of the courtyard and gesticulated excitedly, looking up. My room was not easy to mistake because all Italians sleep with their windows tightly closed.

After a few more feeble beats, they folded up their tents.

The next morning at breakfast there was a loud, peremptory knocking at the door. María came back to say a policeman had orders to arrest whoever had dumped water out of the window. Was I the guilty party?

I assured María I had slept like a log all night.

Her eyes twinkled. After considerable argument, she sent the policeman away.

When she came back—I was the only one left at the table—she leaned over me, her big soft breasts pressing my shoulder, and patted my cheek, saying with a drawl, “You are a liar after my own heart. But you aren’t much of a lover, are you?”

I assured her that my admiration for her was so deep it could not find proper outlet in words.

“That shouldn’t be difficult to remedy,” she replied.

That was the nearest I ever came to flirting with the slovenly María.

Soon after this incident, my bank-draft came through, the envelope indented with the half-moon of hobnailed boots and looking rather water-soaked—the *mutilati* had evidently scattered the mail around carelessly.

SPRING OF BEAUTY

THERE IS NO LEONARDO DA VINCI living in Milan today. But Leonardo's *Last Supper* is there. No one in Milan today can tie his shoelaces.

The great writers, too, have gone from Milan. Now, the highest literary achievement is *Il Popolo*, the raucous, lying, browbeating trickster sheet, run by Mussolini's brother. Literature is turned out by a lot of little flies who buzz around in black shirts, using exclamation marks to denote emotion and a big club and castor oil to enforce it.

What is a city? What is Milan? Is it a Gothic cathedral, a *Last Supper*, an art masterpiece? Or is it the clanging bustle and stink of slums, the hammer of factories, high-class prostitutes in arcade cafés? Is it La Scala Opera House? Where do you look for the soul of a city?

For me, Milan is Leonardo's *Last Supper*. Though I doubt if even half the population of Milan has ever bothered to look at it, for me the *Last Supper* is a symbol of the city's tragedy, a summation of its homely virtues, its failures, shortcomings and grandeur.

Centuries of history have rolled over Italy since that fresco was painted. Invasions, wars, pestilences, domestic strife, oppression, tyranny, democracy, a thousand victories and betrayals. Perhaps the *Last Supper* is as important as any one of those changes.

Will future generations look upon Da Vinci's masterpiece

and say the same of the turbulence and strutting dictators of our age?

In those last days of Milan before the Fascist debacle, how many "last suppers" were being celebrated—just before the knout and lash of the Fascists were to drive the celebrants with broken feet and bleeding backs down the eternal stations of the Cross. This is an eternal tragedy, whatever the stage-trappings with which it is presented.

The *Last Supper*, Italian painting in general, belies the Bolshevik argument that all past art is merely feudal or bourgeois art, hence worthless. Many Communists had suffered intolerances and had perpetrated intolerances suggested by Leonardo's picture. Too, it is a sign of brutishness for any age or any one sect to destroy the works of the great minds or to reject entirely the spirit of another age with which they are not in accord.

This was the sin of Savonarola, of the Spanish Conquistadores, and it has been committed not merely by the Hitlers of the world but also by those who come in the name of man's redemption. But great art lifts above every contemporary dog-fight.

Take Gozzoli's frescos on the walls of the Campo Santo in Pisa that I saw many months later. The beauty of his portrayal of the homely scenes of Italian life of his day tell more of his age than many volumes of history. Except here and there, they do not tell—with their shining alertness and joy of human labor and achievement—of the shortcomings of the Italian city-state political system, its cruelties, exploitation and greed. Gozzoli probably had no social theories. He painted an overly idyllic life; of men loving their toil, their fields, their women, their God; the eternal strength of the Italian nation is there, something that has rolled down through the centuries, regardless of the petty struttings of Mussolinis or the canny intrigues of the

Cavours. Beauty of the human spirit, love of nature and the Italian sun and the fruits and beasts and humans of field and shop transcend all political creed—vital human worth over and beyond all political systems, qualities that existed in the time of the feudal lords, that exist in America, in Communist Russia, as one would have found them even in Tsarist Russia.

2

It was easy to see that Italy—and the world as well—was coiling itself into a new knot of war and strife, that ours is an epoch when momentous things are being decided in brutal and blind ways. In Milan the struggle was coming closer and closer.

But there was going to be no proletarian revolution. Look at the photographs of genial, bearded Turati and Serrati, old-time chicks of the Socialist movement, schooled in parliamentary debate, benign and fatherly, alongside of one of the ferocious and relentless Mussolini, and one can understand in part why the radical movement in Italy was doomed, even though the Socialist Party at the moment held the largest bloc in the Chamber. As a matter of fact, the European Socialist Parties had lost their moral stamina, never entirely to recover them anywhere in the world, by their betrayal of the masses at the outbreak of the World War.

Unlike the parliamentary socialists, Mussolini and the Fascisti—just then getting under way—were interested in the immediate seizure of power; no milk-toast idealism could restrain them. The armed gangsters of nationalism had that first of political virtues—audacity and lack of fixed principles. There were plenty of bloody and senseless frays.

A cavalry officer, resplendent in red-striped pantaloons and shiny black leggings, was guiding me down a slot of a street near the Porta Venezia when the rollicking Old World tune, "*Funiculì, Funiculà*," floated around a corner. A smeary bambino

was dancing hilariously in the gutter beside a hand-organ, in the shadow of high, grimy tenements. The officer pointed at a small, yellowed poster:

PROLETARIAT: 300 of your comrades were killed in this street during the past fourteen months by Fascisti and Royal Guards.

Suddenly my companion grasped me roughly by the arm and shoved me into an inky charcoal shop. A file of Fascisti, with heavy loaded canes, swung around the corner singing their quick-step, "*Giovanezza, giovanezza di bellezza. . .*"

Provocatively, they had invaded a working-class quarter. The dark little wineshops and dingy *trattorie* exploded Communists who fell upon the Fascisti with fists, knives and revolvers.

The conflict swirled around the barrel organ. A window smashed. Isolated combatants rolled in the black mire, clutching for each other's throats.

"*Guardia Regia!*" A platoon of olive-green uniforms and gray iron helmets swept into view.

A few sporadic shots, many shouts, the scurrying of many feet, and the disturbance ended—like a tropic thunder shower.

The rollicking strains of "*Funiculi, Funicula*" resumed. The bambino crawled laughing from under the organ and resumed dancing.

My new room overlooking the Piazza Venezia proved better than box-seats at a series of Grand Guignol performances. The Communists and Fascisti fought a number of pitched battles, two victims being a woman in her final month of confinement and a servant girl shaking out a rug on a distant *terrazzo*.

One night, about eleven o'clock, my window puffed inward with a terrific roar. The Diana Kurssal Theatre across the way had been bombed, ripping and twisting the heavy iron window-bars, slaughtering the entire orchestra.

A crowd milled about the entrance. Police and the Guardia Regia were struggling to establish a lane. For two hours of babbling confusion the police medical corps, bumping through excited bystanders, carried out dead and wounded.

In Florence, months later, I was in a movie house when the audience stampeded to the exits at a false cry of "Bomb!" and my imagination was stabbed with the horror I had witnessed in Milan.

The same night that the bomb smashed the Diana Kurssal, the Fascisti wrecked the new million lire Socialist headquarters, various meeting halls of labor *sindacati* were left in splinters, an unsuccessful attack was made on Malatesta's paper, *La Umanità Nuova*.

3

Exciting days. From Florence came news of the erection of Communist barricades in the Altrarno district; from Puglia, a peasant uprising; from Trieste, the burning of \$25,000,000 worth of lumber in the San Marco yards. Pisa, Siena, Ancona, Cremona and other cities were disturbed by similar violence. In Milan and Rome, the *mutilati* were seizing public buildings, demanding government jobs.

In Bologna several months later to make a first hand investigation of the agrarian conditions, I found myself in the midst of an open peasant-Fascisti land-war. The scenario writer who piloted me around that medieval university town through its miles of polychromic arcades warned me, "If you see a fight or hear a shot, dive for the nearest doorway or drop in your tracks."

It was all a belated flare-up of frustration. The moment for proletarian revolution had definitely passed.

Toward the end of 1921, on a walking tour in central Italy, I was overtaken on the *strada maestra* to Prato-in-Toscana by three hurtling lorries, crammed with Black Shirts—orange col-

lars, red stocking caps, knickers and leggings—headed for the cotton mills in the same town, to intimidate strikers.

When I arrived they had worked their mischief and had plastered arrogant posters over the Palazzo Communale inside and out, had maltreated several officials and had raided union headquarters. The town was in a vivid state of dispute and gesticulation. To find the caretaker of the civic museum, that I might look at Filippino Lippi's famous Madonna, I had to bribe two red-tailed *carabinieri* to help me get him out of a dense and loquacious throng wedged between Pietro Tacca's fountain and the Pretorian Palace.

Many times I witnessed smaller frays and in many a town heard on clear nights the echo of marching feet across deserted piazzas and beneath arches where must have passed also the mercenary soldiers of medieval condottieri. Many a night thereafter, I heard the blood-quickenings songs: "*Giovanezza, giovanezza . . .*" or the old Roman battle cry, "*Eja . . . eja . . . eja . . . alala . . .*" which, perhaps, the legions of Caesar hurled against the Gauls in the forests of the Seine.

Most of the Fascisti at the time were young men, and this lust for night prowling and night violence was in part an unavoidable legacy of the war-marches beneath black windy skies and long wakeful nights in starlit trenches; in part, a primeval passion for the dark, the restlessness of overwrought nerves, and the call that the mystery of warm southern nights makes to every living creature and which the proverbial Italian mandolin playing no longer satisfied. Essentially, night-riding organizations are the product of southern climes. Zero weather does not stimulate the same outdoor romantic enthusiasm. It is hard to feel lynching vengeance when the sleet is driving down. The Nazi movement of Germany, which came along later, smelled much more of beer and pretzels and smoky café rooms.

Yet, walking through Italy those days, I could scarcely be-

lieve that this feudal bitterness was at work. The vineyards and olive orchards of Tuscany, flanked by their slim cypress trees, looked half wild, as they had always looked, but they were being cared for, seemingly, by contented people. The fields of the Po Valley stretched away in endless green and brown panorama of flax and barley and wheat and alfalfa. The littorals of the Adriatic and the Tyrrhenian Sea were richly cultivated; peasants were at work; crops were being harvested.

But the poison of violence and terror was mounting in the blood. The Fascist violence was being carried on under the magic slogan, "Violence to end violence," one of those rotten phrases, such as "The War to end War," or "Save the World for Democracy," which dupe simple minds. The Fascisti now substituted local violence with a violence nationally organized. Soon they made of Italy another armed footpad among footpad nations.

A new World War was declared before the first had ended, when the Bolsheviks seized power in 1917. It progressed further toward open hostilities through Mussolini's coup.

4

When Mussolini seized power—the March on Rome—I ran into a prominent Englishman. He laughed at this apparent mockery of a revolution—all these playboy Black Shirts running around loose, shouting themselves hoarser than democrats in convention, armed with everything from table-legs to machine-guns.

"This is not revolution," he declared; "it is light opera."

"This," was my reply, "is the most serious event in Europe and the world since the Bolsheviks took over Russia."

"This can't last."

"It will last through, or nearly through, the next great war. That may be ten years; it may be twenty-five."

When I stated this in some article, I received many abusive letters from Communists, who decreed that Mussolini could not last six months. Well, Fascism has already lasted sixteen years.

I had seen Fascism grow and conquer; I had studied its utterances, its credo and its technique. I had studied its historic antecedents. I had studied the social forces that composed it. Fascism, whatever its intentions, its demagoguery, its hypocrisy, was a popular movement, a mass movement. It was not merely an adventurous fly-by-night coup.

After Mussolini came in, Don Sturzo, head of the Catholic *Partito Popolare*, truthfully told of "the rapid and violent manner in which the pro-Socialist, Communist and Anarchist (and he might have included 'Catholic') Leagues" had "been transformed into Fasci"; how "the pro-official heads and the dogmas of the Red International" had been "substituted with other leaders and with other myths of a patriotic and national character."

The same thing happened in Germany, where most of the four or five million Communist voters are now doing the goose-step and liking it. The same thing may happen elsewhere.

What a scurrying of the clans there will be if a Fascist régime should hit America. Many New York intellectuals, who stampeded into the Communist ranks during depression days, would be diving into storm cellars; or they would discover the new freedom in some purple shirt movement. For many, a gentle whiff of prosperity has blown the chaff of their hasty threshing in new rôles quite away; some have already tried to beat a retreat not too obvious by becoming Trotskyite which enables them to be redder than Communists but quite respectable and even palatable to Mr. Hearst.

Despite the many antithetical aims of Fascism and Communism, both represent a break down in international capitalism. Fascism proceeds inexorably toward collectivization of produc-

tion, not for the benefit of the people but for political power, the state and military madness. For Fascism is inevitably forced to make greater inroads on capitalism than so-called democracy. In democracy men can still be governed by false illusions. Under Fascism, they must be governed for the sake of monopoly capitalism by bayonets as well as false propaganda. The necessary cost of disciplining the lower classes in this brutal fashion is expensive.

Jack "Legs" Diamond got his start by escorting lucky patrons home from illegal gambling joints so they wouldn't be robbed en route. He stuck them up himself. This is precisely the rôle of Mussolini and Hitler with reference to capitalism.

ARISTOCRATS

ON THE LONG RIDE FROM MILAN to Bologna, the train crew struck without warning, leaving us out in the middle of the fields all day. No diner was attached. A raid on adjacent farmhouses netted only a few raw eggs for the first comers. It was purely a spite strike, typical of labor's frustration and ill-considered moves since the failure of the factory seizures.

As we waited there in the fields, a short, well-dressed Italian requested me to watch his baggage while he stepped out. Though we were in fourth-class, he was an elegant, dashing type, with a tiny saffron mustache, and proved to be a member of the aristocracy: Count Vespuccini of the famous Vespuccini family in Florence and Rome. Later, he showed me the impressive marble tombs of his ancestors in Santa Croce. Now, in an atrocious mixture of Spanish and Italian that dazed and exhausted me, he told about himself with surprising frankness.

Down on his luck, he was returning from Monte Carlo fourth-class because he had lost everything on the tables except his return ticket.

"Monte Carlo, what a grand place!" he exclaimed. "And what a fool I am! Six thousand lire—think of it—thrown away! And with those six thousand I intended to make my fortune. I threw them away! I was too impatient. If I wait cautiously for the proper sign to plunge, then I always win."

"What is the sign?"

"I don't know myself. It is a flash-like hunch—a color glimpsed

through a doorway, a woman's smile, but sooner or later I always get the sign and it is infallible. If I plunge then, I always win. But this time the fever got me. I didn't wait. Naturally I lost everything."

Later, for he was a close friend of a subsequent landlady of mine, a German baroness, I found out how he had gotten the six thousand lire. The Baroness, now slightly down in the world, in her well-to-do days, before her Italian officer husband had died, was quite up in the social whirl. One winter in Rome, she befriended a poor Austrian artist by sending him coal and other necessities. No longer able to afford a model, he asked Baroness Cipriani to "lend her knee, just her knee"—she confessed this to me with a deep blush. One bare leg, even if exposed rather high up, seemed little enough to give a poor artist and fellow-countryman in a foreign land and in distress, especially as the picture was later bought by one of Europe's famous museums.

He gave her a small copy in oil. She had cherished this highly. Although the face was that of another woman, the knee—this secret she could cherish even from her husband, however observant—was hers.

But grown needy after her husband's death, with two girls to provide for, when Count Vespuccini offered her a hundred lire for the picture she regretfully accepted. He blackened it up, heated it to crack the paint, forged a nineteenth century name to it and sold it to a gullible American for six thousand lire. Then he streaked for Monte Carlo.

Now, coming back on the train, he told me in detail of his famous campaign in Spanish Morocco. He had been badly wounded in the knee—he made me feel the hard lump on his leg.

Later, Baroness Cipriani told me he had never been near any campaign, but he had been hurt in an automobile accident in Tripoli; in fact, he had used this physical disability to get army exemption.

But his brave wound was a line he used with all the fair ladies. Even a girl of recent acquaintance, however prim, could hardly refuse to feel his knee and be duly thrilled by such intimacy with a real count and simultaneously filled with pity and admiration.

He was constantly engaged to foreign female tourists. He didn't bother with German or French girls, the money exchange was too poor, but specialized in wealthy American, English and Swedish women. At the moment he was simultaneously engaged to a big blonde Swede, a head taller than himself—a beautiful aurora type, like a glad sun over the horizon of man's dismay—and a very ravishing American girl whose father was a millionaire soap manufacturer. Such as these gave him expensive presents, which he used to pawn—one of his most reliable sources of income.

What wealthy American girl could resist the moonlit charms of a real Italian count who was also youngish and handsome? What saddened Vespuccini was that he might now make a really excellent match were he not already married to a wealthy Spanish Marquessa. He had run through much of her money before she got wise to him and became fat. Now, she shocked Italy, which she visited every season, by a remarkable entourage of long-haired Spanish poets and musicians. Vespuccini ground his teeth at this repeated affront to his honor, though he would not have minded if her purse strings had been equally open to him. Hadn't he given her some of the best years of his life, even after she did get too fat? His periodic efforts at a reconciliation, his forced caresses, now netted him small return. He preferred, whenever possible, to invest his gigolo charms elsewhere.

Vespuccini and I stopped at the same modest hotel in Bologna; he, lugging his heavy suitcase and darting down back alleys in the hope that no acquaintance would catch sight of him. The

next morning before train time, he was munching away at a *biscotti* and Talmoni chocolate. He assured me he never ate any breakfast, but I fancy it was really the Monte Carlo dis-aster speaking.

Later I often saw him flitting around Florence, with a pedigreed dog on a leash, a cane crooked in one elbow, to which invariably some heavenly creature of foreign vintage clung adoringly.

2

In Florence I first secured lodgings with Signora Shoener on Via Massaccio—a good thing, for thereby my interest in Massaccio was aroused. Signora Shoener was a short, dark Neapolitan schoolteacher with little, sharp, black eyes, a hook nose, much trickery and laughable false pretensions, who had an explosive but sighing “*Mah!*” for all contingencies.

Schoolteachers at that time made around five hundred lire—about \$20—a month; she rented out a room to help meet expenses, for she was educating her fifteen year old daughter Margharita in an expensive convent school. The Signora was delighted when I paid her three months in advance to get a reduction in price. She herself would send for my trunk at the station and save me from the dreadful cutthroats who always leeches on foreigners. Subsequently she gave me a bill for cartage three times the amount I would have had to pay the cutthroats.

She was a spiritualist, also a good Catholic; but, despite this double-barreled faith, she saw nothing wrong in frequently cutting school and forging her own doctor's certificates. Margharita couldn't pass her grades, so her mother bribed the priest to give her the best marks in the grade.

Her shabby gentility she maintained at all costs. She always sneaked out to market at a very early hour through back streets, so as not to be seen by respectable friends. She did her own

washing, but would put it on the line late at night and get up at dawn to take it in, so her neighbors, whom she didn't even know, would never learn of it.

Once she came home with a live chicken. She kept it in a dark closet along with clothes and shoes, though it was always getting out and making messes around the house. I was glad when it went into the pot.

She had gotten a divorce from her Swiss husband in Switzerland, since divorce was not allowed in Italy. While there, the owner of the *pensione* tried to make *pasta asciutta* in the approved Italian style, just to please Signora Shoener, but the latter could never stomach it. She became so hungry for some properly prepared spaghetti she decided to cook some in her room—not genteel, but no one need know.

She bought an alcohol stove and set to work. But just as she was pouring the water off at the proper moment, so the *pasta* would be neither too hard nor too soggy, the whole mess slipped off into the bed-chamber.

Definite evidence of her crime. There was nothing to do but empty the bed-chamber herself. She peered up and down the hallway, then sallied forth, chamber in hand.

She bumped into the stately landlady herself. The landlady protested volubly. "But, Signora, you shouldn't think of emptying this yourself. That is servants' work." She seized the chamber out of Signora Shoener's hands.

The shame of that discovery still burned in her breast.

Margarita, a pretty little thing, was already having violent cases on the boys. Though she primped, her life was embittered by her mother's insistence that she still wear babyish dresses scarcely coming to her plump but shapely knees.

Margarita never lifted a finger to help her mother. Her mother forbade her to. Margarita, to become a grand lady and marry well, had to grow accustomed to living as one always

with servants to order around. Her mother ever enacted the rôle of the servant. If at the table Margharita wanted a glass of water, she would snarl at her mother to get it for her.

Gradually Signora Shoener came to hate me because I kept my windows open at night. She and Margharita, regardless of how hot the weather, slept with doors and windows hermetically sealed. Though my open windows did not affect her, it outraged the good woman that I violated the teachings of centuries. Despite having overcharged me for my room, she was glad when I left.

3

I took an apartment at Baroness Cipriani's on Via d'Mori across the Arno. My balcony overlooked the lush Bobolino gardens; Boboli proper was only a few blocks away. Down the street to the Ponte Vecchio, daily I passed the old home of the Brownings, the Guicciardini and Pitti Palaces, and the old Knight's Hospice where Machiavelli worked. On the side street, winding off just before the river, once lived Dante's Beatrice, and the great poet must have passed there many times.

The Baroness Cipriani was a slender, pretty woman in her early thirties, with very soft, kittenish ways and entirely too loquacious—she told me most of her life-history even before I took the apartment. I was glad my quarters were quite independent.

One winter, when she was seventeen, her family took her to Rome. At a ball there she fell violently in love with an Italian officer over forty. Her horrified family would not permit her to marry so beneath her station, least of all an Italian and a man so much older. But the night before they planned to rush her back to Germany, she eloped.

Her father went off in high dudgeon and ever since had refused to communicate with her or to help her, even when she fell on hard days.

During the World War, her husband, by that time a colonel, was killed in very peculiar circumstances. While he was home on leave, the Austrian drive on Venice began—the terrible Italian defeat of Caporetto, so well described by Hemingway in his *Farewell to Arms*. The colonel patriotically cut short his leave to rush back to the front. He neglected to advise his superiors.

In the dark his train passed through the Austrian long-range bombardment, then was stalled on a very high bridge, the fore part of which had been smashed—a miracle that the whole train-load of troops had not plunged into the abyss. Colonel Cipriani, finding himself the senior officer on the train, stepped off the car to go forward to look over the situation.

The cross-beam where he stepped off was broken. He plunged into the black river, was swept away, disappeared entirely.

Since no one on the train knew him, his fate was not known. He was posted as a deserter.

The belief that he had deserted was strengthened by the fact that his wife was a German. Her army allowance was cut off, and her door was placarded:

THIS HOUSE PROVIDED A DESERTER AND TRAITOR

With two children to support, she, a German in wartime Italy, with no income and no savings, was reduced to miserable straits. First, she sold her jewels, then her furniture. Finally she and the two babies were sleeping on the floor on pallets and eating at public charity kitchens.

Everybody turned against her except one of her husband's oldest friends. When the War was over, he gave her money to investigate Cipriani's death.

Tracing clue after clue, she decided he might have fallen into the river. She discovered a priest in a small church downstream.

Yes, a body had been washed up near the curatage. The priest had kept the epaulettes, papers and lock of hair, then had buried him quietly, for the Austrians were all about. Witnesses also were finally unearthed to testify as to how Cipriani had actually died.

The colonel's body was brought back to Florence and re-buried with full military honors. The Queen of Italy sent the Baroness a public apology; she was given a double pension and scholarships for her daughters in the finest Church-finishing school in Italy.

The Baroness still kept the epaulettes, hair and medals in a musty tin box. She enjoyed showing them and weeping, for she liked people to comfort her.

The Baroness used her charm and insinuation to reinforce her title, to which she had no legal claim, to impress tradesfolk and anyone else willing to be impressed. All her silver and linen were embossed with the family crest—the only time I have ever slept between such distinguished sheets. One of her stunts was to invite underlings to tea in the grand manner, then make them work, mending stockings, sewing, what not.

4

The Baroness had a roomer, Lydia, who left a week after I took the apartment and whom I only saw once. The Baroness liked Lydia dearly because she had money to squander and was generous; but she told me odd tales about her in a shocked, delighted tone—how Lydia liked to lie naked on the floor before her fireplace and in the bath-tub. The Baroness, it seemed, still clung to the prudery of her convent school days when the nuns had taught that a pure girl never bathed except in some sort of gown and never looked upon her naked body. Lydia, daughter of a wealthy family, lived alone, for apparently she was a nymphomaniac who had indiscriminate affairs. There had

been several frenzied searchings around for abortion doctors—transactions which had netted the Baroness juicy commissions.

But their good feelings came abruptly to an end. A man clouded their friendship. The Baroness, apparently having an affair with a fellow named Antonio Romagnoli, had introduced him to Lydia, with sad results.

Romagnoli was a thin, nervous rascal who struck me as a mild paranoiac. He glared wildly through thick-lensed glasses; his face and hands twitched, his complexion was sallow and pimply, and he had a high-pitched, furious voice. What any woman could see in him was beyond me—the eternal mystery only a woman can answer.

But Lydia, when the Baroness went off to the convent school, a trip of several days, to see Bici, one of her daughters, promptly added Romagnoli to her well-knotted string, in fact developed a brief but overpowering infatuation for him. She was foolish enough to write him impassioned letters in which she re-lived their physical relations with lush and bawdy minuteness. Presently he was blackmailing her with them.

Not wanting her family to find out, she confided her dilemma to the Baroness. The Baroness, her heart black with venom, sweetly offered to help her out. Romagnoli had demanded five thousand lire; the Baroness cut the figure to fifteen hundred, which Lydia, with a sigh of real relief, turned over to her.

I suspect the Baroness, having her own little leverage, got the letters back for nothing and pocketed the fifteen hundred herself. But this did not still the hate in her breast. After a violent scene between the two women, Lydia packed up and left.

Romagnoli, I am sure, in one way or another, was prying money out of the Baroness, despite her scrupulous care and grasping instincts. He always showed up when her pension was due, and even close-fisted females can be fools in a money sense

when a man is involved. But after his cheating on her with Lydia, the Baroness tried to break with him.

Romagnoli grew violent. Several times he pinched and slapped her. Angered, she ordered him away. He threatened her with a revolver. He was such a hot-tempered person, she was terrified and refused to see him at all.

He warned her that if she didn't he would kill her or kidnap her child, Giaconda. From then on, the Baroness personally took Giaconda to school every day. But the strain was making her a nervous wreck.

After another unpleasant scene with him, right on the street, much as she hated scandal, she went to the police. Romagnoli had a bad record; the police exiled him from Florence forever.

He sneaked back and, a bit humbled, begged the Baroness to see him just once, then he would no longer bother her. In fear and trembling, she made an appointment, leaving word with me that if she wasn't back within a certain hour I was to advise the police.

They had a high scene from which the Baroness returned pale and shaken, but everything was now over. He was coming for a box of personal effects, left a long time before at her house. That was to be the end.

The Baroness, mortally afraid to see him, came to my apartment to ask me whether I would come over and give the box to him and say she was out. Under no circumstances was I to permit him to set foot in the house.

He shouted furiously when I informed him the Baroness was not in. "She's home, and I know it." He tried to force his way in.

I stood my ground, and he pushed against me. I doubled back my fist. He stepped back, gabbling furiously, making threats. Was that bulge in his pocket, I was thinking, a gun? His eyes glaring, half crazy with rage, again he tried to push by me.

I gave him a healthy shove, then seized an end of his box, which I had already dragged into the hallway, and heaved it out, end over end.

He jumped back to save his toes. His hands came down on the box. His straw hat fell at my feet.

As I bent to pick it up, he leaped over the box at me with a cry of rage. Caught unawares, I twirled the hat at him hard.

It struck his glasses and cut his face. In a dazed way, he dabbed at the blood on his nose.

I slammed the door shut.

He banged and banged, screeching at the top of his lungs, cursing, threatening to bring the police. He knew the Baroness was more afraid of public scandal than anything else.

After he quieted down somewhat, I said through the door that there was a policeman right down in the street whom I'd call myself.

There was a long stillness. Then I heard him muttering to himself and tugging at the box. Presently he engaged a coachman to help him take it away.

The Baroness was ready with a glass of brandy for me, and she insisted, not very flatteringly, that my face was deathly pale. She offered to lend me an old pistol. "He'll lay in wait and kill you," she said. "I don't want the responsibility. I got you into this mess."

I wanted no pistol. The only persons Romagnoli would really threaten, except in a moment of rage, would be women and children.

I never saw him again. And thereafter the Baroness never mentioned him. But from a certain confusion in her manner, when once I brought up his name, I had an idea that in spite of all she had resumed relations with him.

DANTE TO PAPINI

MY THIRD OUTSTANDING THRILL in Europe—after Coruña and the Greco room—had occurred when I stepped for the first time—right after my arrival in Florence—into the blue-gray Piazza Duomo with its cathedral, Giotto's pink-gold campanile, the Bautisterio, the Loggia, the statues of Michael Angelo and the castings of Benvenuto Cellini, the plaque where Savonarola was burned. No architectural ensemble in the world quite equals it, with its great monuments, Ghibelline battlements, old palaces, its long glimpses down the arcades to the many tinted houses overhanging the Arno River and its further long glimpses down the corridors of history. Few settings tell such a vivid story of human struggles, defeats, victories.

Glories in which to revel! No Balboa looked over a new unknown ocean with more eagerness than I upon the history-tossed waves of Florence. I took possession of it in the name of human enlightenment. Mine was no aesthete's pilgrimage. I could not look at beauty merely for beauty's sake, but as part of a larger whole. I had to know the cause, the story, the meaning, the hope envisaged. Why did such a line, dominant in the work of an era, emerge when it did? What did it signify? What did it mean in terms of man's freedom of expression, the ideal state, the good life and the good society? About me echoed the marching feet of Black Shirts, history in the making. The reality of the present, sadly enough, did not measure up to the glories of the past. The human spirit and human society were

greater in the days of Leonardo than in the days of leatherneck Mussolini. In Leonardo's day the human spirit was breaking old bonds, the human mind was awakening from the lethargy of centuries, a fresh brave new world was emerging. We, too, are on the threshold of a new world. But the agonies and putrefaction of the old era are still stronger in the nostrils than the fruits of victory. For me, Fascism was the hemorrhage of a sick man, and the bright blood spilled forth, which by some distortion of human thinking was hailed as a sign of vigor, was filled with the germs of future chaos.

I felt closer to Michael Angelo, to Botticelli, to Lorenzo di Credi, to Perugino than to the scenes of greedy violence about me. Deeper than any religious myth in their painting was the consciousness of life awakening. What an expedition to wander into the palace to the frescos and paintings of Vasari and Andrea del Sarto, Michael Angelo's statues in the Bautisterio, to wander over to the Loggia, down the arcades to the Palazzo Uffizi, with perhaps the greatest single assemblage of notable paintings in the world, on to the Arno and the Ponte Vecchio, with its glistening old jewelry shops and strange traffic and aimless whirling bats at twilight—just as the sun was painting the last sandbar with golden light! On beyond lay the stately Pitti Palace and more paintings.

For a whole year I lived in a fever of discovery, poking here and there under the battlements, from the House of Dante to the Archaeological Museum, the cell of Fra Angelico to the Spedale, Santa Croce, Santa Maria Novella, the Spanish chapel. I visited the old Tuscan remains. Five centuries ago, the Etruscans filled teeth with gold. They were, remarks Anatole France in his *Red Lily*, "a sad people; they made caricatures in bronze." That is better than making them in the flesh as modern Italy was doing.

I loved particularly the Spedale with its porcelain *puti* by the

elder Della Robbia and, across the way, the old church of Savonarola, with Ghirlandaio's unusual *Cenacolo* and the paintings by Fra Angelico—few painters ever surpassed the delicate harmony of his colors, the lyric swing of his figures, except on rare occasions Fra Lippo Lippi, Botticelli and Gozzoli. Fra Angelico's constant motif of golden trumpets is like a flame that calls at the portals of mystic heavens with a blind faith I could never know.

Every twilight I climbed up to the little plaza at the entrance to Boboli where stood Michael Angelo's *David*—not a very happy piece of sculpturing, despite the centuries of praise lavished on it—to look down on Florence, the Arno, the Piazza Duomo, the campanile of Giotto, the old bridges, Santa Maria Novella, and the long reach of the Cascine. Later, I found other beautiful vantage points among the Altro Arno hills. My spirit expanded with the memories this city evoked, all its notable bravery, its great achievements, its great names. Something of the energy, the boundless enthusiasm, the bravery of those giants of old was communicated to me, ever to make me impatient of my own and other's mediocrity—the only sort of priggishness in man that is perhaps justifiable.

2

I was now reading Italian with ease. I poured through the works of the Renaissance writers. Dante was the hardest—and most beautiful. Some of his lines echo through all eternity. A favorite passage of mine was that where in the springtime Matilda, in flowering robes, came "*scegliendo fiori per tutti le vie.*" It tied up, somehow, with Botticelli's *Primavera*. And I was in Florence in springtime, the hills about ablaze with Swedish broom, the scarlet poppies spreading a flame down the meadows of the Arno under the heavy-laden clusters of ripening dark grapes poking through tough, fuzzy leaves.

I read Machiavelli and Tasso and Boccaccio and Petrarch and Ariosto, the sonnets of Michael Angelo. Leonardo da Vinci's notes I read in a quaint seventeenth century English translation I picked up in a book stall back of the Palazzo Comunale—"My friend loved landscapes . . ." I pored over Cellini's autobiography, the one volume that Goethe declared that, in case of fire, he would save from among all the world's books. Vasari's five volumes of *The Lives of the Painters*, one of the world's most remarkable biographical collections, infused every fresco I saw with warm intimacy; I could see the human foibles behind these exalted efforts: the quaint adventures, coarseness, pranks, intrigues, selfishness and generosity of the most madcap group of artistic geniuses the world has known.

Gradually I got down to more modern literature: Giosuè Carducci, Leopardi—a soul tortured by some premonition of disasters to come—D'Annunzio, Papini, Benedetto Croce, Gentile, Giovanni Verga. For some reason I never dipped into Pirandello, barely dipped into Pareto, but from what little I did read of the latter, I cannot account for the furor of the belated translations of his three volumes in English two years ago, except perhaps that idea-starved America will accept any abstruse philosophy which carries a foreign trade-mark and éclat, is fairly unintelligible and which thereby lessens the necessity of examining our own institutions.

Having gone over such a sweep, I went back and read minor things. It would be tedious to enumerate them all. There are few available works in Italian literature that I have not read. There are times when one approaches certain of the old masters with heaviness of spirit, as an intellectual duty to be performed by the man who would call himself cultured. But I was in the uplifted mood those days in Italy which made no piece of Italian literature a bore; I was eager to sift through any number of haystacks of drivel to find one needle of beauty or truth.

I read every line of the *Sermons* of Savonarola. Despite his apparent blazing sincerity, I soon recoiled from him for being a stuffy old bigot, hypocrite and too politically sly. Though so enamored in boyhood of the concept of high-minded martyrdom symbolized by his figure, now, reluctantly, I ended by detesting him. Not that I was enamored of the corresponding bigotry of the Church authorities who annihilated him, but in his puritanical self-righteousness and narrow-mindedness, he had burned some of the finest paintings of the era, such as those I was in the process of admiring. How many Savonarolas there are among us today! He was a pompous enemy of society whose fame rests on being burned at the stake by other enemies of society.

For a while I had a D'Annunzio craze and read practically everything he has ever written, a large order, for he is one of the most prolific writers of all time. All the spume and spray of the Italian soul and language spout over the reefs of his magnificent posing. He deals in emotional outbursts, in Baroque description. His intellectual capacity is feeble; his talent lies in depicting brilliantly a very narrow range of emotions: love, jealousy, sexual satiation, lust, ingratitude, petty revenge. Often he has a marvelous sense of form; more often he is undisciplined, erratic and magniloquent. He resented having his genius fettered by form, hence his genius suffers. But just then I needed the golden scrolls and cubes of his atrocious exuberance, his luxury of prose, his reckless imagination. His fruits hang heavy on the bough.

His life and work have a certain grandeur of scope, but his work will molder more and more with time, for mostly he was devoid of deep moral motivation. His life had a magnificent showiness, behind which was a set of cheap, cad-like acts and unendurable vaudeville. For that reason he is adored by Italians:

if he had had discipline, he might well have been, not the poet of nationalism, but the Mussolini of Italy. Basically their characters are very similar.

3

In Papini I found a good antidote for D'Annunzio. For Papini, up until his *Uomo Finito*, was an incisive, brilliant critic with a penchant for destroying philosophy with philosophy, plus wit, plus satire, plus psychology. *Testimonianze*, *Altra Metà*, *Stroncature*, *Crepuscolo*, *Memoria di Dio*, *24 Cervelli* are fine, forceful and satirical essays. Few writers up to that time had ever stimulated me quite so much. The glee with which he tumbled over gilded idols in philosophy, literature, art, politics, was hale and hearty, a brilliant fury of debunking, far superior to Mencken's.

No man was more mortified than I, when after his half-savage memoirs, *Uomo Finito* and a period of complete rural retirement, this once virulent agnostic wrote his maudlin, banal and vague sentimental adorations, *The Life of Christ* and *Life of St. Augustine*, which because of gooey sentimentalism had enormous sales in all countries.

Today, however, as I analyze his work more critically, this becomes the logical evolution for him. His brilliant iconoclasm, at bottom, was not a re-evaluation of philosophy in terms of the social and economic factors in the lives of philosophers to explain their peculiar slant upon the universe, but a mystic hatred of thought itself. He conceals this well, but his own reiterated phrase *fuga della realtà* betrays that his intellectual brilliance was basically merely the pyrotechnics of mysticism. His later religious conversion and banality were as inevitable for him as for Mencken to wear a big Kansas sunflower in the year 1936. Papini was for a long time a disciple of William James' *Pragmatism*. But he was not enamored of James' utilitarianism, but of James' acceptance of a convenient cushion for the soul.

James, who in another manner had demolished older philosophies, ended up in a chaos of tolerant utilitarianism; James' surrender to the American provincial business mind was as inglorious as Papini's surrender to the traditional Italian stream of religious mysticism, of absolutes and Christian dualism, his, the quaint welding of mysticism and Fascism. And yet, in those earlier works of his, he, as much as any man, stimulated my powers of thought and understanding. Those works will live on.

GOMBO

A FINE WALK FROM FLORENCE was to near-by Fiesole—site of an old Roman settlement, where part of an amphitheater still stands, though not so well preserved as that in Mérida, Spain—empty and memorable under the hot sun that once shone down on gladiators with flashing swords and victims thrown to the lions. On beyond Fiesole were beautiful yellow-flowering hills.

In less than an hour, I could reach a beer garden two-thirds up. It was pleasant to sit there through twilight till dark and watch the river sheen fade and the glow of sunset windows die out and the many lights spring up on the plains below, on the Ponte Vecchio, the golden necklace of them in the Cascine; the little bee-like clusters were towns here and there along the Arno.

Another good jaunt was out to the Chertosan Monastery, with its fine vista, its rooms of carvings, its inlaid olive and walnut, polished and aged, its massive vaults, the fine grave slab by Donatello. Siena, too, was a marvelous place to visit with its topsy-turvy streets and, above all, for the vast sweep of frescos in the Palazzo Communale; and there in Siena one finds nearly all the work of Buoninsegno, one of the greatest of the *primitivi*.

Early in July I set out on a walking trip through Tuscany. Over the Strada Maestra to Prato Toscano, then on to Lucca, one of the most delightful little cities in Italy, a white shininess to it. Though it is located on a very flat plain as compared to Siena and Florence, a remarkable view can be obtained from

the road on a lofty medieval wall that almost completely encircles it. No city in Italy has such an amazing collection of bell-towers. There in Lucca I discovered the finest *Cenacolo*, after Leonardo's, for originality of composition and subtle color climax, that I know—that of Tintoretto.

In Lucca abides the spirit of the great Civatelli. He is a strange example of the penetrating influence of the Renaissance art movement which so mysteriously swept all of Italy, for he was born and he died in Lucca. Only once did he set out for Rome, but I believe turned back before he got there. All his life he labored within the tight walls of Lucca. He sprang full-bodied from the closed-in provincialism of the town as miraculously as some Greek legend of adult Goddess birth.

Walking from Lucca to Pisa, I mistook the road. Taking a wild cross-cut over the hills, I arrived very late in the afternoon, coming out not at one of the gates but blank against the lofty medieval wall that stretched unbroken for half a mile. But though I was tired, Fate was kind to me; when I did find a gate, it led smack into the Piazza Duomo. In the late light of a sun already set, the cathedral, Bautisterio, Campo Santo, the leaning tower were all frosty gray, but a queer luminous frostiness that made them seem to shimmer with a light from some inner source.

Though I had missed my lunch and had not yet found a place to stay, I could not tear myself away, and sat on until the full moon rose up. More than ever it imparted to the buildings that strange effect of inner luminosity, as though they were actually made of milky onyx from the heart of which shone an imperishable fire.

Here Galileo worked. There in the cathedral is the lamp supposed to have given him his law of the pendulum; and from the Pisa tower he is supposed to have worked out his formula for the velocity of falling objects.

I wandered on into the town and found a little *pensione*. Pisa enchanted me almost as much as Florence. Though not so rich in its showing of Renaissance art, in the great frescos of Benozzo Gozzoli in the Campo Santo, the whole life of late medieval Italy flows upward in lyric joy, the vision of a new world unrolling before the eyes of man.

2

Gombo is not the name of an elephant, a Siamese prince or a breakfast food. It is a royal château of King Victor Emmanuel of the House of Savoy and is situated on the Ligurian seacoast north of the mouth of the Arno River—a little gem of a retreat surrounded by four hundred square kilometers of pine and oak forests and plantation lands, known as the Cascine Vecchie di San Rossitore. The Cascine was founded by the Medici; the present buildings at Gombo were built for the pastime of the Kings of Italy.

But far more significant: On July 8, 1822, Percy Bysshe Shelley, while crossing the Gulf of Spezzia from Leghorn for Lerici in the *Don Juan*, was drowned in a summer tempest directly opposite the gates of Gombo. Two weeks later his body was tossed up on the shore. The pockets of his coat still bulged with a volume of Sophocles and Keats' last book of poems, doubled back to the *Eve of St. Agnes*. On August 16 the body was burned on the sands in the presence of friends: Leigh Hunt; Mary Godwin Shelley, his wife and author of *Frankenstein*; Lord Byron; and Edward John Trelawny "who loved Shelley, traced out his corpse and snatched from the fire the Heart of Hearts."

Being in Pisa, I was able to visit Gombo one hundred years to the very day after the poet was drowned. The whole of the previous afternoon I wasted trying to secure a special permit

to wander at will through the Cascine and out on the beach, but was unsuccessful.

So, on the hot morning of the eighth, I set out boldly, not with a Maxim for assault, but armed with a small wad of lire, which in overtouristed Italy is more potent than pen, sword, or the cross. Knapsack on my back, kodak at the hip, two sandwiches in my shirt, staff in hand, I swung over the Arno by the Ponte Mezzo, down the long cool arcades of the Borgo Largo, through the vast Piazza Duomo, out through the New Gate, along the Stradone de la Cascine—a straight white road flanked with poplar trees and sluggish irrigation ditches.

Carts creaked past, loaded with pine-cones and wood from the royal forests; high-bodied, blooded white oxen tugged patiently at great timbers; quivering thoroughbred horses were enjoying their morning outing. Here and there barefoot men crept warily along the canal banks, hunting for eels, or flung flies for fish smaller than the thumb, or wielded enormous nets fastened to bamboo cross sticks. A glorious walk under the spreading trees with vistas of open hay fields and the dark green of forests beyond!

After four miles, the road parted, flowing around the wire fence that enclosed the administration buildings of the vast estate. I turned rapidly to the right.

But a warden wearing Puss-in-Boots buskins and a green feather in his gray hat, intercepted me.

I gave him an ingenuous smile. "This, I presume, is the road to Gombo."

He picked me over with a hostile eye. "Ughuh. Let's see your *permesso*." Pointedly he informed me my journey had come to an end.

"That's too bad," I said mournfully. "I had set quite a store on walking through the Cascine." I commented about the beauty of the countryside, the picturesqueness of his costume, the kind-

ness of Italians and the great loyalty of the King's servants, finding an excuse for lingering by taking an exposed film from my kodak.

"If you *should* go in," the warden speculated, rubbing his chin, "you couldn't take that kodak along."

I promptly handed it across, remarking that I felt quite safe in leaving it in his custody.

He took it dubiously. "But say, just *why* do you want to go to Gombo? *Perchè? Perchè?*"

"Well, a poet was drowned there"—that was what I meant to say, but in reality had stumbled upon one of those many confusing preterit and perfect tenses with which Italian abounds, so that my remark really was, "Well, a poet has just been drowned there."

"What!" With a sun-burned hand, he promptly beckoned me inside the wire enclosure and locked the gate behind me.

Telling me to wait "with patience," he jumped on a bicycle, pedaled furiously off. Soon he pedaled furiously back, his eyes round and staring, apparently afraid that I had somehow taken French leave.

Presently a fat paunch, bedecked with a massive gold chain, waddled around a turn in the path. The newcomer regarded me with dark suspicion and demanded in a hard tone: "You say a man died near Gombo?"

"Yes, a poet."

"How'd he get in?"

"He didn't. His boat capsized and his body was thrown up on the shore."

"No *body* has ever come this way—*mai, mai!*" he said with the dogmatic conviction of a man who never slips up on his official duties.

"It was burned in the sands—by friends."

The fat man exchanged a sharp glance with the warden.

"Now look here," he went on. "What was the name of this poet?"

"Shelley."

"Scelli. Italian *davvero*?"

"No, English."

"Ma!" Relief relaxed his features. He felt himself on firmer ground. Englishmen are always doing unusual things. "When did you say this happened?" he asked.

"July 8—"

"What! And his body already burned?"

Such goings on in the sacred Cascine of the King bewildered him.

We were, I was rapidly realizing, talking at cross-purposes. He was obviously thinking I should be turned over to the police. Like most officials, he was so intent on getting at the facts that he prevented one from giving him the facts.

But I hastened to add, "Excuse me, I tried to say, July 8, 1822. A hundred years ago today."

The fat man wrinkled his brow painfully. Well, Englishmen were queer, poets were probably worse, and Americans were sons of Englishmen—it worked out quite syllogistically: A dead poet and a modern "nut" wanting to see where he had died.

His fatness consulted volubly and passionately with the warden, using enough gestures to have appreciably reduced his weight had he held dumb-bells in his chubby hands. I was to be allowed to proceed.

The fat official waddled off, mumbling about stupid people that made him walk in the hot sun. The warden gave me final instructions.

"Mind now, don't take your coat off; that would be showing disrespect for his Majesty; and don't go wandering off the road—*sempre diretto, diretto*. They won't let you go past Gombo

to the sea, but— Well, have you anything to eat? You can't picnic on the royal farms, you know."

He pawed painstakingly through my knapsack. Meticulously he examined an aluminum cooking outfit as though it might possibly be a bomb, then made me throw away small quantities of tea and sugar. I thanked my stars for the two sandwiches under my shirt. I could keep my canteen—apparently one could at least have a drink of water without offending his Majesty.

And so with the warden's final "*capisce, capisce?*" ringing in my ears, I stepped through the King's four hundred square kilometers of plantation and forest.

3

No more shade trees arched overhead. The sun was now high and blazing hot, and the dust, eddying up from my feet, acrid and choking. After a cautious glance back toward the group of administration buildings, I sacrificed respect for comfort and committed *lèse-majesté* by removing my coat.

On either side well-tended forests stretched for miles. At intervals an unseen cuckoo, that prince of European birds, would call to me; rabbits started up from the roadside; fat partridges whirled out of sight through the trees. The shady depths looked cool and inviting. But I set my face resolutely to the hot, white roadway that is a two-mile rule laid down between the administration buildings and Gombo.

At Gombo, a pompous caretaker in shirt-sleeves—where was *his* respect for royalty?—came to the latticed fence.

I peered through with curiosity at the queer steep-roofed gabled red and yellow buildings and informed him gently that I had come to see Gombo.

But Gombo was not to be seen under any circumstances.

"At least I may look at the sea?"

"The road ends here," he said, puffing out his cheeks oddly at the corners of his lips.

Patiently I explained that I had come all the way from America to gaze upon the sea at this particular spot—I avoided the subject of dead poets—that I had walked these many miles just for that purpose. I waxed eloquent upon the beauties of the Ligurian coast at this particular point.

"But you can't leave this main road," he said, though more kindly. "Still, I suppose that if you kept close to the outside fence—not an inch away—it might not be construed as leaving the road; it might be construed that you were following the road if it did keep on going."

Beaming, he struck his hand through the fence in a meaningful manner.

I seized and shook it heartily.

He regarded me with a hurt expression, licking his brown lips.

So I shook his hand again, more gently, with less American gusto, and this time left in his sweaty cushion a two lire note (not quite ten cents).

He beamed brightly, and I followed the road that was not a road.

"Whatever you do," he called after me, "don't go in bathing. That is highly treasonable. All this coast is reserved for the King."

I continued along the fence, dodging around the deserted concrete sentry boxes until I came at last to the Ligurian Sea.

4

The greenest of green seas and a forlorn sandy shore—this is the outlook from Gombo. Save for the royal bathing pavilion, thatched and weatherbeaten, save for a rickety diving pier and three or four palm leaf shooting blinds, the coast stretches for miles on end without a sign of human handiwork—this in densely

crowded Italy, crying for expansion. Only far south, at the mouth of the Arno, the village of Marina is a fleck of gold on the white sands.

My gaze wandered out over the green sea to the tiny island of Gorgona; then, swinging about the palest of blue horizon circles, rested upon the hazy mountains beyond Lerici—that never reached goal.

My mood changed—one of those quickshifts in human feelings that transforms the whole aspect of the universe. The spirit of the lost poet hovered over the shore, investing it with pathos and solemnity. His impassioned and meteoric career flashed before my retrospection. The waves broke with that same austere and relentless cadence of the last sublime passage of *Prometheus*:

To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy power which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor flatter nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free.
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire and Victory.

The majesty of those rolling Latin words—how like the sea itself: the three first rhetorical lines, like short waves; the quick drawback halfway through the fourth line; the sweep of the rest of that line and the fifth which creams over into the broken spray of the last lines; the pound, pound, pound of the last three lines, with their tossing foam of words and their driving strength of triple rhyme.

And telling over this passage, which I learned years before, which had served me in good stead in many a dark hour, I was now possessed by a burning urge to feel the sea—Shelley's sea—against my chest, the same sea that had taken his life.

I was sweating; I was parched with a thirst that the lukewarm water from my canteen would not allay. All the King's horses and all the King's men would have had to stand between me and those low-diving Mediterranean breakers.

Quicker than the telling, I was running naked into the surf; and a dashing wave broke in a dazzle of spray over my head, and a quick delicious chill shot through my body. Glorious—for a second.

But all the time, I was thinking of Shelley, of the catastrophic blow with which nature had felled him as a lesson in real charity to those whose bigotry had helped to drive him into exile; of the momentary peace and relaxation, perhaps, with which he had set sail that clear, hot morning a hundred years ago. I thought of that last ambitious but unfinished poem of his, *The Triumph of Life*; for Fate, it would seem, had determined to punish the audacity of his having seized upon such a theme. I thought of the story of Job, which he was planning to put into metrical dress, and I wondered whether the Job he might have created would have been a greater soul even than his Prometheus—a soul whose lofty patience would ultimately have shamed an unjust tribal God into righteousness; who would have hoped, as did Prometheus, until hope created from its own wreck the thing that it contemplated, who would thus have achieved spiritual liberation, even as Shelley had done during those years when English public opinion and the English courts were tearing at his vitals. I imagined the poet pondering over this great new poem, matching its rhythm with the pulse of the sea he was riding, a pulse which quickened to violent fury, and I visualized his own life enacting the tragedy he might have written.

And suddenly the very salt of the sea seemed to carry the tang of his spilled blood, and the sea had grown more warm than the surrounding air. I was being bathed in something more

than sea, and the surf beating on the shore seemed still to carry the echo of his dying cries.

I ran naked up the shore, shaking the big drops from my body with something like fright. Panting, I lay down in the sun to dry.

All around the horizon, clouds were puffing up into the azure sky, but their stalks were black, like those of the white mushrooms that spring from the mire of the Pontine marshes.

In awe, I watched the gathering storm, wondering what poet—these hundred years later, when the world is once more a fury of hate and destructions—what poet, what great soul, perchance is perishing, being held up to popular derision, to whom the world will some day pay its belated homage.

And my hand fell upon a heap of purple shells; white on the back, purple in the hollow, and where the purple melted into white, their texture and tinting were like the skin of a beautiful woman—or of a poet—beneath which delicate veins flowed with rich life.

Were I living in a less practical-minded age, I might have imagined that the gods had willed that the shells on this coast be forever tinted with the blood that pulsed from the great *Cor Cordium*. Certainly the blood in the veins of Shelley was of royal purple, more royal than that of the Kings of the House of Savoy who have usurped the magnificent shore where he died; for though there are greater poets than Shelley, he, and perhaps he alone, stands with Dante in loftiness, purity, steadfastness of soul, unshaken honesty of purpose and unflinching idealism.

And when I had dressed and tramped back around the road that was not a road and the road that was a road; when I finally redeemed my kodak, I gave the green-plumed warden two purple shells.

"These," I told him, "are worth more than all the lire ever

printed by the Banca d'Italia, for they are tinted with the blood of a poet."

And now I knew the perplexed fellow believed me hopelessly mad.

THE MARCH ON ROME

IT RAINED IN NAPLES ON OCTOBER 24, 1922, when the Fascisti swept into their second annual political convention in the Sala Madaloni with their helmets and canes, their tricolors and black banners.

The Vesuvius of Fascism was smoking. "*Fascisti, a Napoli ci piove, che chis state a fare?*"—demanded Michele Bianchi, the general secretary, with ironic significance, touching the chord of an old Italian proverb: "*Ci piove, Governo ladro*"—"It rains. Curses on the government."

He hinted at victory, victory soon. "How shall we achieve this victory? . . . I believe we understand each other perfectly."

The Fascist armed drive was to begin.

Said Benito Mussolini: "We are at the moment when the arrow parts from the bow or the cord breaks."

Two days later the March on Rome, the Black Shirt *Putsch* began.

October 28th, Premier Facta tendered his resignation. The King, blissfully swimming at Gombo and getting his name in the papers in glowing accounts for saving a fisherman's boat at the mouth of the Arno River, hurried to Rome to try to save the Italian state, foundering at the unruly mouth of storm-swollen events.

Signore Facta was patted on his pudgy back and told to do his best till the crisis was averted.

It was not that kind of a crisis. He tried bluff, and it was not

a moment for bluff. His best was to mass cavalry and machine-gun lorries in the Piazza della Pilotta, put out barbed-wire entanglements and fling heavy guards at the city gates and the Tiber bridges.

I was eyewitness to these events, for I had gone to Rome sometime before, on a day when a general strike had shaken the kingdom, the last and most serious, as well as most desperate, ill-organized, ill-timed and futile acts of the out-manuevered proletarian leaders. This time the railway workers did not walk out. They had been threatened with martial law and the Fascisti guaranteed that in any case the trains would run.

As we rolled south, at every station squads of Black Shirts with steel helmets and clubs or guns paced the platforms in an arrogant, menacing manner. The State feared the seizure of power by the Fascisti, not by the proletariat, yet it saw no harm in permitting those armed thugs to usurp the police power of the State.

Now, months later in Rome, with the Fascisti uprising announced, we were in the dark as to what was really happening. Even the government was in the dark. For the Fascisti had seized the telegraph lines and postoffices—"the *ganglia* of the nation."

The army authorities sent bicycle scouts pedaling furiously over the country roads to find out where the great Black Shirt army was encamped, and these pedaled back furiously to report a hundred contradictory rumors. The papers the previous day had carried few dispatches, but these told briefly of Fascist mobilization. Now, on the 28th, there were no papers, no news—just excited crowds crammed into the piazzas.

2

During the morning hours, the Fascisti posted typewritten circulars on downtown buildings announcing the full success

of the movement in Tuscany and calling for Black Shirt mobilization in Rome at midday.

Even that morning a small group of Fascisti, without opposition from the Guardia Regia or the police, took charge of traffic on several main streets. Down Via Due Macelli and the Corso Umberto I swept a motor truck filled with Black Shirts, screaming: "Up with the Tricolor! Up with the Tricolor!"

Red, white and green banners were flung out everywhere in house and office windows.

From Milan came the order of Fascist martial law, signed by the "Quadrivirate." (How the word echoes the long record of violence down the Italian centuries!)

"The hour of decisive battles has sounded. Today the army of the Black Shirts reaffirms the since mutilated victory, and, striking fiercely at Rome, returns that victory to the glory of the Campodoglio."

Premier Facta, twenty-four hours too late, a week too late, months too late, tried to take eleventh-hour measures to stem the Black Shirt tide. But now it was a question of war. The government would have to play, as its last card, martial law and violence, blow for blow. Facta began to put martial law into effect.

But the King, his attitude a mystery, refused to sign the decree.

The Fascisti, unhindered, had been coming into town on the dead-run, armed with canes, table-legs from wrecked labor headquarters, burly tree roots, pistols and rifles. At the news of the King's refusal to sign the martial law decree, they gathered exultant before the royal palace on the Quirinal. The King, it was clear, was trying to save his skin, also to avoid civil strife and thus save the monarchy, regardless of the type of rule that resulted.

At twelve o'clock, the hour for Fascist mobilization, the

rain began to pour down, a steady drizzle that soon quickened into downpour.

Not a sign of life. Only rain driving against the centuries-old rustica and travertin walls. Rain and wind. Capricious wet gusts sweeping in a gray blur past the Janiculum and the Campodoglio, across the broken columns of the sunken Forum.

I rushed around everywhere, rain or no rain. Crouching in the doorways of central plazas, drenched in open courtyards, mobilized soldiers waited like stiff wooden dolls. No enemies were in sight. Apparently both the revolution and the putting down of the revolution could wait until the skies cleared. But in mock attitudes of war the soldiers squatted there, idle, motionless. They were supposed to be enforcing a martial law decree that had never been signed, issued by a cabinet minister who had resigned but was still serving.

Rain had defeated revolution before in the history of the world. The '48 fizzled out in England because it rained on the great day.

Now, here in Rome, standing in the Piazza del Popolo, I was rapidly becoming soaked. The rain was so heavy I could not even see the great, white, semi-circular monument to Victor Emmanuel II—the Altare della Patria—at the head of the Corso. Above me the Pincio, that hill-perched park where five centuries ago the greatest cardinal of the day came to drive out evil spirits, the dripping trees lifted fantastically against the gray rain-curtain, dim hobgoblin shapes.

I took refuge in the dingy Caffé Europa opposite the flight of gray and pink steps leading up to the park and plumped myself down in one of its threadbare upholstered wall seats.

"Que scherzo! What a farce!" exclaimed my long-nosed neighbor. "The rain will put the kibosh on everything."

I started out again, splashing through the puddles . . . toward the street-car tunnel beneath the Quirinal. At Via Tri-

tone, I turned toward the Piazza Barberini and Fascist headquarters. . . .

A few grumpy-eyed youths hung in the entrance with heavy cudgels and guns. . . . Things would happen, I was told, bound to happen. . . . Ancona had been occupied. . . . The Terni ammunition works had been seized. . . . Twenty thousand Fascisti were camped five kilometers out on the Via Nomentano with cannons and machine-guns. Sixty thousand were coming south from Tuscany. . . .

I splashed off. The rain and wind shook my umbrella, my coat—like a dog, shaking a rug. Cold damp crept up my legs.

At the Royal Palace on the Quirinal—nothing, not even an extra guard. The Secretary of War slipped into the courtyard in an enormous limousine and stepped out leisurely.

At Montecitorio, where the Chamber of Deputies meets, two olive-gray uniforms as on every other day in the year. 'Twould be different soon.

At the headquarters of the Supreme Council of State in the old Palazzo Spada alla Regola in a squalid quarter near the Tiber—not even a guard, just a vacant vista through the giant portals and the stone courtyard to the rain-drenched gardens beyond. In the Piazza, a few smudgy bambini sailing straws between the cobblestones.

At the Ministry of the Interior, where the resigned cabinet was in constant session, two full companies of soldiers, soaking, shivering, hashed into a futuristic polychrome by the lines of the iron grillage of the gate and the falling rain. But not a Fascist, not one.

Where did revolutions happen? . . . I plowed through the ruck past the Piazza della Pilotta. The nine government machine-gun lorries with their revolving striped red, white and green turrets loomed indistinctly in the wet; two hundred white

horses hung their heads in the rain; two hundred cavalymen, guns in hand, crouched in the surrounding doorways.

Here and there in the larger courtyards of the central buildings—the Palazzo Venezia, the Palazzo Pamfili-Doria—I spied other detachments of cavalry, waiting, waiting in the rain, waiting for the Fascisti, waiting orders from a resigned cabinet minister, waiting for the decision of the King.

In the Piazza Venezia, in front of the long white surge of granite steps of the monument against the side of the Capitol, twenty green buses were stacked up against the east curbing—dismal, rain-stained in the vast empty square.

In my room on the Via Croce Bianca near the Great Forum, I took off my squalid shoes and stood on the balcony staring at the twisted water pipes on the rear wall of the buildings opposite, staring into the rain, without even ambition to investigate the story of twenty thousand Fascisti on the Via Nomentano.

But out there near the Mons Sacer, the seceding plebs had camped twenty-three hundred years ago. Over that road had passed the legions of conquering Caesars coming to take Rome, the Eternal City, the center of the world. How many times? How many times in a year? How many times in a century? And on that road, in 1870, the troops of the House of Savoy had come to batter down the walls at Porta Pia to found a new nation. And now the House of Savoy seemed tottering. Or would the runty little King save his head and crown at the price of honor? We know the answer now.

3

Nothing happened the rest of that day or during the night. The following morning, Sunday, the 29th, the rain had ceased.

But what was going on? What were the Fascisti doing? What was the government doing?

Coming along the Via Tritone at 10:30 I came upon the Fascisti burning up paper and subscription lists of *L'Epoca*. They had smashed in the front entrance and were now carrying out a dead Black Shirt who had touched a high voltage wire near one of the presses. All the labor and Nitti dailies were being sacked.

In the Piazza Barberini, on the site of which the historian Sallust must have looked down from his gardens, the surging horde of Fascisti was growing larger, more clamorous. They had been drifting in from Florence, Perugia, Arezzo, Città Vecchia. They were still coming in, by bicycle, motorcycle, truck, train, aeroplane—on foot.

Crowds were out today, chattering, restless, curious. The Fascisti were policing a long lane of people down Via Tritone through which hurtled explosive automobiles with Black Shirts and Blue Shirts (Nationalists) clutching side, rear and top. Detachments came quickstepping, arms outstretched in the old Roman salute, crying their Roman "*Eja, eja, eja, alalà*" to the time-stained walls and azure sky. None of them seemed to have any determined destination.

On Via Quattro Fontane, between the Via Quirinale and the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, I ran into a melee in front of a gun store. The Fascisti had ripped out the iron shutters and were bursting forth again, new weapons in hand, like black bumblebees out of a shaken nest.

A company of gray-helmeted soldiers, rifles at the thigh, raced down the hill on the double-tear, their nail-shod shoes ringing on the cobbles. Things looked ugly.

I crowded into the lobby of the Teatro Quattro Fontane directly across. . . . The theater attendants stood, hooks ready to slam down the shutters if anything serious happened.

But the Fascisti had their spoils. . . . They were reprim-

manded, allowed to keep their stolen guns and went their way unmolested. They had the run of the city.

At four o'clock the *Giornale di Roma* issued an extra that the King had appointed Mussolini minister.

All Rome surged into the streets, down the avenues, swirled about the gates of the Quirinal. The herd had bent its head willingly to the yoke. The government had bent its head. The King had become a silly puppet.

A new era had begun as it began in Rome so many centuries ago with the dictatorship of Sulla. It was another high light of the cruel era begun in Europe when war was declared in 1914.

4

On the evening of Fascist victory, on the narrow street leading to the Pantheon, I came upon the Black Shirts swarming out of the Roman headquarters of the *Avanti*, staggering under great loads of books and furniture. These were carted down under the complacent eyes of the Royal Guards to the fashionable Corso Umberto I, and heaped upon the muddy stones, tracked with three days of marching and countermarching.

The flames leapt into the twilight sky between the medieval Palazzo Doria and the old Church of San Marcello. I read some of the torn title pages beneath the shifting feet of the jeering crowd: Max Stirner, *The Ego and His Own*; Trotsky, *Our Revolution*; Lenin, *Imperialism; Progress and Poverty*.

My rooms were directly across from the Great Forum, whose shattered columns bear mute witness to the futility of human violence—and its apparent inevitability. I also lived next door to the Camara de Lavoro for the Province of Rome. For three days and nights bands of marauding Fascisti stood outside and pumped bullets into the labor headquarters, occasionally firing at lights in adjoining houses. A flower-pot on the *terrazzo* above struck and crashed into the air shaft.

On one of those nights, I had an urgent engagement and tried to go out. Opening the door, I saw the silhouettes of the Black Shirts dancing beyond the lurid bonfires of the looted building. From that ring of hooting figures spurted reckless firing from high-powered rifles. My courage abandoned me.

I slammed the door shut and jumped back. Just in time. The bullets peppered the heavy door, fortunately at an angle. The next day I counted eight holes in it.

The firing was ended by the battering in of the front entrance of the labor headquarters—no one was within—and while the Royal Guards looked on, papers, furniture and typewriters were hurled into this narrow street of the White Cross. Even the doors and window sashes were wrenched loose until the edifice stood black and raw, lit by the flickering flames from the cobblestone wreckage over which the firemen, with their tiny old-fashioned fire-engine and thin hose, casually spurted a feeble stream of water.

For days armed lorries still hurtled, and every guttersnipe was abroad with the tricolor, blood-lust in his eye, protected by his suddenly acquired Black Shirt, his orange collar, his skull and crossbones symbol and his black fez. In the theaters the Fascisti climbed up on the seats to spy out and maltreat all those who failed to lift their arms in Fascist salute or to wear the proper smile of joy over the occasion.

But by and large far worse violence against dissident minorities are practiced every month of the year in my own America of beloved democracy—lynchings, tarrings and featherings; police brutalities, raidings, and lawless murders; from Florida to Chicago the hiring of armed thugs in strikes; the same sort of gangsterism.

When my American articles on these violences in Rome began to be commented on bitterly in the Fascist press, I received various anonymous threats of beatings and castor-oil and warnings to leave the country, but I paid no attention to them.

THE MAN WITH THE BIG JAW

I FIRST SAW MUSSOLINI IN Bologna at the time of the bitter struggle between the Socialist land league and agrarian Fascisti. In the Teatro Comunale he addressed about five thousand Fascisti.

He spoke extemporaneously, with explosive energy, almost abusive toward his audience. Nasty, intolerant ego was labeled by his projecting jaw, the doubling of his fist, the rooster-like manner of throwing back his head, his dogmatic utterance—traits to be still more exaggerated by later power.

He leapt to conclusions intuitively; but they were right, engraven on tablets of stone, merely because he uttered them. His mind jerked from idea to idea faster than his audience could follow, but with telling phrase so that his emotion-mad sycophants did not need anything but push-button catch-words. He had absorbed a few philosophical tags from Sorel, Proudhon and the Italian idealists and nationalists, which he had the knack of expressing in dilute, disconnected and sweeping generalizations—but with original and telling phrasing. Not so rhetorical as D'Annunzio, nevertheless he had a poetic love of apt wording. He blurred main outlines and content. An epigram was more important than logic.

His speaking gestures were compact, strong, but overly affected. He posed his body in driving home his ideas rather than using merely hand-dexterity and the hair-pulling effervescence of most Italian orators. His favorite gesture those days was raising his left shoulder slightly and leaning forward, hands tense and close to the body, a sort of chip-on-the-shoulder

posture. This accentuated his large semibald skull and caused the whites of his eyes to gleam in almost darky fashion. The gloating head-thrown-back-looking-down-the-nose attitude became more frequent with increasing authority.

His eyes, dark, not flashing, even when angered—as he was after a small meeting of close adherents—have a veiled quality, not of the dreamer, but the indefinable smoldering haziness of one who has enjoyed some new and delicious emotional experience and is still slightly intoxicated, as though drunk with life, power, applause. And always he was the consummate actor, always he had the strut and bellow of the demagogue.

The day after his arrival in Rome, following the *coup d'état*, I waited for him to come out of the Hotel Savoy, up in the Ludovisi quarters of Rome. An amusing ceremony was staged to get him to his automobile. The hotel entrance was carefully guarded by helmeted Black Shirts. First came a lackey with luggage, then, on the run, another plain-clothes lackey to open the door of his car. This lackey so resembled Mussolini that the crowd at the door began to cheer.

It may have been his brother, Carlo. Or perhaps, those ticklish days, a replica of the real Mussolini went ahead to chance assassin's bullets—a sort of twentieth-century poison-taster.

The real Mussolini, however, was announced by a shrill trumpet, more than anything else resembling the tin horns used by the street-car employees at the Rome traffic crossings.

The new Duce of Italy walked with a queer, affected tread, a slow, deliberate, flat-footed walk, a sort of relentless stalking, with lips pursed into a grimace, face fierce, like some grotesque primitive war-god, head slowly pivoting on a thick neck like a ventriloquist's dummy. This gave him a heavy-set appearance, although he is actually of scarcely average build. This

same impression of stockiness is imparted by the slow, strong movement of his shoulders and the crouching forward thrust of his large, bald skull.

As he stepped from the hotel entrance on that day, he seemed to have acquired an entirely new poise, a consciousness of his own importance and new responsibility. For a moment, as he met two friends at the automobile, he was laughing, good-natured in a condescending way. Then I noticed how brown his complexion, how big his mouth, how greedily sensual his lips. His nose was bold, aquiline; his features, massive. Mounting his car, he dropped off his easy smile, like a monarch taking a throne; again he was the self-conscious conqueror, demanding obeisance, rotating his head with imbecilic hauteur, or lifting up slightly and stretching his thick neck like a rooster that has just trod a hen.

He had won out by his volatile adaptability of thought, his seeming allegiance to new principles while adhering only to a concept of power and conquest; his Calvinistic determination; his vast Cromwellian ego; his bombastic posturing; his genius for phrase-making; his audacity.

2

On one occasion I sat down for about a week in the Library of American Studies in Rome and dictated translations of every published speech of Mussolini's on which I could lay my hands.

From Papini, Croce, Pareto, Gentile and D'Annunzio, and, in more practical ways, from Corradini, he had absorbed current doctrines of pragmatism and "violence within limits," ideas indirectly derived from Hegel and Sorelian syndicalism. The Fascist logic proceeded from an examination of the character of violence, its supposed social function, its limits, the weapons for converting violence into revolution, the proper scope of

revolution, the establishment of the totalitarian state, finally war and imperialism. Naturally all this was merely a rationalization of power-lust and gangster methods.

In Mussolini's speeches, I found a complete development of these or similar ideas in his own racy language, a concept of just how a revolution would proceed to be victorious, how to maintain that victory unchallenged once it should be achieved.

In 1920, in Trieste, for instance, he rhapsodized to his audience about the moral value of struggle; and in *Il Popolo*, he directly stated the "concepts of violence that Sorel developed magnificently." He told how the Fascist candidates were victorious in the preceding election, not because of their ideas and program, but because of the "prestige of violence." For this reason, "the great popular mass" submitted, converted by "the fascination of violence." Violence was "the creator of valor and the resuscitator of enthusiasm."

And he concluded: "If the Italian Socialists had read Proudhon, they would have known what admiration this revolutionary had for Force."

At the Social Theater in Udine he declared that "in forty-eight hours of systematic violence we obtained that which we have not obtained in forty-eight years of preaching and of propaganda. . . . Our violence is . . . conscientious, highly moral, sacrosanct, and necessary." So is that of the Alabama cracker who lynches a negro. So is that of the Chicago police when they maltreat wounded human beings and murder strikers with clubs and gas provided by the steel companies.

Mussolini, of course, claimed that the function of Fascist violence was to transform society—destruction in order to create. Such violence should be limited precisely to its purpose. As I heard him say in Bologna: "We do not make violence a school, a system, or still worse, an aesthetic. An 'aristocratic'

line should be maintained in all Fascist violence, just rectification and a legitimate reprisal." Is not this also Ku Klux Klan doctrine?

He outlined from time to time the precise steps which would be taken to bring the Fascisti into power. He favored retaining the monarchy, so that the people would not think that all had fallen, "that all should be reconstructed, because after the present initial wave of enthusiasm will follow the waves of panic, and perhaps the succeeding waves would be able to overwhelm the first." In the Fascist revolution there would be no succeeding waves.

Long before he came into power, he said clearly that the Fascist revolution was not a social revolution but a means of organizing Italy for international war and conquest, a Santa Guerra, which would liberate Italy from the powerful nations of the earth, such as England, France and the United States, recover Italia Irredentia, or Italian populations encased in France, Switzerland, Jugo-Slavia, British Malta, Tunis, etc., and bring back Italian hegemony over the Mediterranean.

England abetted the rise of Fascism in Italy in many ways. So did France. Now they are paying the piper, along with the rest of the world, for their shortsightedness. But Mussolini never fooled them as to his purposes; he shouted them from the roof-tops. They merely preferred to fool themselves.

Mussolini had a clear insight as to what he wanted, where he was going, how to get what he wanted. He let the wide world into his confidence. His Ethiopian War follows the pattern he laid out for himself, his party and Italy, sixteen years ago, before he had ever put his heel on the neck of the King and of Italy and became an international menace.

He is merely part of the logic of capitalist development. He is merely belatedly following the course of expansion previously

followed by France, England and the United States. On that score, honest men cannot condemn him unless they are willing to condemn previous imperialisms and all imperialism, including our own.

NEWS ON THE PINCIO

TO KNOW ITALY'S GREATEST EP-
och, there is no better plan than that which I accidentally followed: first, see Florence, for it is the greatest Renaissance center, key to all else. From there Pisa, Siena, Ravenna, Lucca and other near-by towns, each great in its own way, each a noble column in the modern movement which liberated the mind from hierarchical dogma, are easy to reach. Tuscany is the great vantage point from which to look backward and forward through the maze of cultural relics that comprise imperial Rome.

So well did I learn my lessons that when I visited the Sistine Chapel, I could name the painter of every mural except two. The background of Florence gave anchorage in the welter of civilizations that have left their mark on the Eternal City. Rome, like Florence, put me in a fever of discovery.

Of the five patriarchal churches, Santa María Maggiore, perched on one of the "seven hills of eternity," is one of the most sumptuous and interesting, with its dazzle of African marble, its inlaid apse, the colored maze of its Cosmato flooring, the cool gray sculpturing of Mino da Fiesole. There one gazed up at the roof encrusted with the first gold brought from the Americas—a gift to the Pope by his Catholic Majesty of Spain. It has a dark hue as though there actually had been compressed in it the blood of native peoples that were murdered that this gold might eventually decorate a holy ceiling.

Quite apart from the richness of adornment, Santa María

Maggiore was one of my favorite haunts because it was the nearest, hence the only conveniently located public building which kept open during the blazing hours of noon. Often, that hot Roman summer, Santa María Maggiore was the only place I could cool off.

I still remember one ball of fire noon that I remained there until at last the heat broke in a thundershower. The cavalry of the sky swept over the roof in sudden storm, volley on volley of rain. Then strangely, with the coolness, the temple air seemed to grow tainted, musty with the odor of moldering bones. I rushed out. Not until I was outside, under the flapping awning of a fruit-vender, did life revive.

I visited most of the old glories of the Roman empire. My quarters being right beside the Great Forum, I spent days on days wandering through the labyrinth. In contrast to those notable remains of vanished glory, the catacombs are like the sewers of power; they are musty now with the bones of martyrs. Such things made me smile a little wryly at the flamboyant claims of modern nationalism, those exuberant Black Shirts, those heavy-heeled 100 percent Americans, those intolerant believers in the supreme perfection of present virtues. A little sect down in a sewer gnawed its way up into the sunlight of the mighty, and by then the empire was a myth and Christianity donned gold and purple robes. Our modern Caesars, in reality, are petty men, snarling over the bones of an already dead world, eating carrion on the dump-heaps of a cracked civilization.

There are compensations—and compensations. Not the least of the memories of those days is that of a flashing smile from under a green parasol on a tearful morning, a morning that drizzled down on the mongrel cats of the sunken Little Forum; the trek up ancient creaking stairs; the low-beamed room under the eaves and dormer windows looking out adroitly on moss-

covered tiles; and there within, the faint gleaming highlights on olive flesh, ivory highlights on olive limbs as perfect as man is vouchsafed, firm, cool, pointing breasts, and arms that circled life's forgetfulness in life primordial, life renewed, the flame rising and licking away the dross of all and slithering off to drowsiness of mornings of rain, rain damp on old travertine walls, rain over the Seven Hills of Eternity, rain gurgling down twisted rain-pipes, spouting from gargoyles, rain pattering soft on tiles, and an olive glow turned to a dim shadow like a perfumed memory gliding perplexedly just beyond the stream of consciousness.

2

Late one afternoon I crossed the little bridge of Cuatro Capi, built before Christ, which leads to a small island in the Tiber, to see the churches there.

A group of poor artisans, gathered in a corner by a high wall, were shouting and gambling *pares è nones*, a game I had never seen. A well-dressed bystander explained it to me.

He claimed, after I had mentioned my profession, to be a reporter on *Il Messaggero*, who had come over to investigate a suicide. Two lovers, it seemed, had thrown themselves over the parapet upon the river rocks. Would I like to accompany him to the spot?

The road, flanked by the outer parapet and by a tall garden wall, curved along the river unbroken for nearly a mile, a lonely stretch, for most people used the straight street from bridge end to bridge end.

Halfway along this road, we came upon three men gambling under a tree. My *Messaggero* friend stopped to watch—the simple old game of laying down three cards. Pick the queen of spades, and you won.

My new friend got into the game and won every time, not

small amounts but five hundred to a thousand lire. Having such good luck, he urged me to take a hand. I flatly declined.

Thereupon my friend put up five hundred lire, half for me. I protested and, when he won, declined to accept any of the winnings. He acted as though my refusal were an insult.

His luck was so good the other players went into a huddle about it. Deftly my friend leaned over and creased the corner of the queen of spades. "Now you can't possibly lose," he told me.

I refused to play. Undoubtedly my impromptu friend was in with the gang. Another round was played—for an odd amount. They appealed to me to help them make change. I happened to have about three thousand lire on my person, but said I never carried much money, not enough to make the change needed.

Suddenly I realized that others had come up. Around me was a ring of about eight persons. And it was growing dark. There was little likelihood of anyone coming along here. I was in a jam.

"Come," my friend said peremptorily, a purr of menace in his voice, "let's see exactly how much you do have."

All this gang of cutthroats had to do was take my wallet and tilt me over the parapet onto the rocks. The suicide story now struck me as a preliminary intimidation. I had to think fast.

"I can't make change," I told my friend in an agreeable tone, "but I have an idea to get into the game. Come over here a minute."

I pulled him out of the circle of menacing faces ostensibly to talk to him alone. He was tall, larger than I, but without warning I slugged him in the jaw, sending him full length in the dust, and took to my heels.

I got a good start before he or the others could recover from their surprise. Then the whole pack took after me.

I did the long distance to the next bridge in record time. I am sure I beat Nurmi's record. They never cut down an inch between us. It was practically dark when I reached the bridge. At the near-by corner was a policeman. Traffic was coming and going. They did not dare pursue me further.

The next day I related the incident to an Italian friend, a well-known writer. He told me I had been lucky. A number of bodies had recently been picked up off the rocks. Probably they had been murdered.

3

During my stay in Italy I wrote many things: short stories, part of a novel, poetry, a play, and to make some money, many articles on Fascism, the Italian railroads, Trieste, the agrarian and co-operative situation. Already I had decided to rework a good deal of my magazine material into a book, for which I would write additional chapters, so as to give a complete picture, with proper European and Italian background, of the origins and rise to power of Fascism.

When the book was well along, I received a curious jolt. One day I stopped in at the American Express Company for my mail and went up the Scala Spagnuolo to the Pincio to read it. A letter from Benjamin Huebsch (later Viking Press) said he wanted to publish my book on Mexico but that the manuscript, in bad shape, needed revising and bringing up to date. Could I do this within two months?

Huebsch's letter puzzled me. I did not know he even had the manuscript. Later, I learned that my mother had sent it out to four or five publishers, several of whom had written flattering but negative letters. By then things had changed considerably in Mexico, and as I was far from the scene and inter-

ested in other things, I wrote her not to offer the manuscript anywhere else. Some day perhaps—it represented a lot of work under trying circumstances—I would get to revise it. How then, nearly two years after, did I receive a letter from Huebsch saying he wished to publish it?

My mother, I found out, had gone on a vacation. My father, not knowing of my latest instructions, but noticing a manuscript, sent it out to the next one on the list. He sent out an old, almost illegible carbon copy, not even the final version, and with entire parts missing. Huebsch was right in suggesting that the MS. was not in very good shape.

It had been lying around his offices nearly a year. Suddenly—though apparently dismayed by its appearance—he decided they wanted to publish it. I am sure that if I had been a publisher and had received such a dilapidated illegible carbon copy, I would have shipped it back posthaste without even reading it.

Huebsch finally gave me four instead of two months for revision, so I decided to finish up the book on Fascism (*Rome or Death*) and return to Mexico as quickly as possible.

Rome or Death was finished a few hours before taking my train to embark for America. The last thing I did in the Eternal City—after driving past the Fountain of Trevi and throwing in my penny to insure my future return—was to drive to the postoffice and mail it.

4

The French consul, a tall, important-looking bureaucrat with a pasty face, neat black beard and white waistcoat, after stamping my passport, took my fifty lire note and, without offering me my twenty lire change, beamed brightly, folded it precisely and thrust it into his pocket with a cordial "*merci beaucoup*," and bowed me to the door with exaggerated courtesy.

Who, in the face of such grand airs, would sink so low as to ask for change?

I left Rome on a night train—hard benches, fitful dozes, dots and dashes of moonlit sea.

Shelley, Florence, Pisa, Siena, Livorno were behind me. We passed through Spezia, Levanto, Rapallo. Dawn rose over bunched cubes of buildings, tangled fields, woods like a fringe hanging from the flat table of the dark sky, finally Genoa's golden towers. As we neared Milan, the majestic view of the Lombard Alps loomed up.

More of the Lombard plain, gray old Turin, then the winding course of the train up into snow mountains. It was the dead end of winter. Spring would come.

In my compartment a well-built Italian girl with large, handsome features and bare arms, perhaps of the better artisan class, was returning to France and her husband after a visit to her family near Cremona. She was very worried for she had hurried home without her papers, only a frontier pass that had expired.

An immigration official came through the train. I handed over my passport. "*Americaine*," he said, smiling, and did not even open it. "Your wife, of course?"

Before I could answer, he had gone on.

At the frontier she helped me with the customs officials, and we had coffee in the dingy station, waiting for two different trains, while she gave me lessons in French conversation.

5

How nice the gray slate roofs of France looked, so old, so solid, assured, picturesque, deft. Italian houses looked square, dumpy, uninspired, uncomfortable inside and out.

Two fruitful years in Italy had come to an end. Thanks to those big loaves of Italian black bread which sold for four

cents and lasted a week, and cheap figs and grapes and other expedients, I had managed to survive, not the six months I had expected but four times that period—two years of real drunkenness of the spirit, intoxicated by beauty and intimacy with one of the world's greatest cultures, and in the midst of stirring events.

There had been bitter moments. A nervous breakdown. My wartime experiences, the hardships in Mexico, now the sudden undermining of old beliefs, the necessity to build up a philosophy of life on a new and broader basis, acute financial worry, domestic disillusionment, all contributed to plunge me into despair.

Perhaps every person breaking the bonds of inherited beliefs and really seeking for life's meaning and his own rôle therein must go through something similar. Though it seemed to me quite unique at the time, all possible disasters seemed to overtake me precisely at the same moment.

Yet even the bitterness served to enrich life, to create moral values, to impart a definite inner vitality, assurance and strength. Certainly it linked me more intimately to the scenes I was witnessing. One is closest to those places where one has lived the most, where one has loved and suffered, where life has been spiritually full. No two years of my life have ever been fuller than those two formative years in Italy, full of trial and error, full of eager effort and study. Italy—especially Florence—is an inalienable part of my spiritual heritage.

But I left in sadness, glad, very glad, to leave. Coupled with personal disillusionment which blinded me for the moment to much of the great wealth I had garnered, was the knowledge that the Italy I had known and loved had been trampled under foot by the blundering, singing, arrogant Fascisti.

Now, though filled with encouragement by Huebsch's acceptance of my book, mine was a lonely, meditative trip. Once

across the frontier, I seemed to belong nowhere. It had been years since I had seen my own country. Mexico now seemed remote, out of the world. Was I becoming one of those lost soul émigrés?

What was this constant reiteration that a man needs roots? Surely one did not grow less vital by seeing and knowing the world. Yet I felt futility. For the more one sheds one's narrow provincialism, the more one alienates himself from one's fellows, from one's own country; and though one thereby becomes richer in experience and knowledge, one discovers that this larger perspective is merely annoying to others less fortunate. And what use are good muscles if you can't use them?

Too, it was growing on me that it was really an absurd business being an independent free-lance writer, unless one can afford only to write books. Our great god is business, and the one intelligent principle of business is to make money. Ideas are of worth only if they contribute a real dollars and cents profit to someone or other. Most successful writers—there were shining exceptions—were those who found a salaried niche in some big organization and supposedly peddled freely their thought and imagination, but in reality recited formulae built around the balance sheet; or those who wrote dead average stuff with great mass demand. In both cases the edge of one's best talent was worn smooth.

After reaching these conclusions, I made an entirely inconsistent decision. To hell with roots. Plants had roots. Man should be free of them. He should come of age and not lose his stamina because he did not fit in at a back-slapping lodge-gathering, just because others felt the need of being part vegetable. And as for writing, since, to borrow Duranty's phrase, I wanted to write as I please, I could some way or other earn my bare keep. I asked no more.

CHAPTER XIX

PLUMED SERPENT

VERA CRUZ SEEMED LIKE GETTING home. Roots or no roots, I immediately grafted myself back on to the roots I had sent down there during more than two years' residence before—and put down a few new ones.

Vera Cruz was the New World. The tempo, the attitude of the folk, a certain rawness, a mongrel quality—all was subtly different from the Old World. There was something in common with even a sun-stricken, half-sleepy little city like Vera Cruz, there on a tropic sea, and the great bustling New York that stamped them as not of Europe, but of this, *our* New World. Even if suddenly set ashore here without having known one's destination, one would have known instantly this couldn't be Europe, but the younger continent. Here was a sense of freedom, of hope, of becoming, of horizons.

Born in the Middle West and brought up in California, as a boy, for weeks at a time, I had roamed far and wide through the mountains—up Mount Wilson, Mount Baldy, clear back across the stiff ridges into Ventura and San Bernardino counties. Our family for a time had lived in Altadena in the shadow of mountains where for miles on end the meadows were an unbroken flame of yellow poppies. It was open country, still untamed. There was freedom to range widely. It gave one a grand sense of opportunity and also a consciousness of kinship with all eternity and all the universe.

Iowa had not yet crowded in upon the West. Bungalows had not yet carved up the poppy fields. Concrete highways

had not threaded the canyons. Summer camps had not been stuck in every valley of what, when I was a boy, was virgin empire. Monopoly had not yet laid its hand upon the country's resources, choking the lives of free men. The world was a symbol of hope.

Europe, much as I had dallied pleasurably among its departed glories, was a closed-in world. Everywhere I had found high walls, boundaries, aristocratic estates, royal domains, rules, regulations. At times I had wanted to push everything aside to be free to wander at will. Europe already had hardened arteries and was weary, weary to death, *rigor mortis* already in its veins. For three years I had kept my hand on its palsied pulse, had felt the deathly fever rising. Bled white by the previous war, nevertheless it was already preparing for a new one. Fifteen or so years would be required. Numbers of little conflagrations, rising to the grand smash. In the last war, American business had been given temporary partnership in the British empire. That war had been fought to save the British empire. There would be a new test of the empire, an effort to smash it, to lift the dead hand of its choking economy from the highways of the world so that life on this earth might grow freer again. The sad thing was that those who sought to overthrow it came with the same slogans of murder and power. They would all merely tear themselves to pieces. Fifteen or twenty years, I felt, would see the new march and counter-march of armies and a death toll that would make the last war seem insignificant; and then, in four or five years more, the hosts of the newer Russia blindly overrunning the continent.

But I did not see all the picture clearly. If anyone had told me in that year in 1923 that America soon would face one of the worst crises of any country, that it would wallow in depression year after year, not because of Chinese famine and

overpopulation, not because of nose-counting and limited resources, but in the midst of relative abundance, of enormous productive capacities and relative plenty, it would have seemed a voluntary national masochism to which no intelligent people would submit themselves.

In 1923, there in the clear, hot life of far-off Vera Cruz, the New World, in contrast to the Old, seemed unusually young and untroubled as I sat lazily imbibing cool drinks under the age-old arcades beside the plaza with its enormous trees and black screeching birds and evening music and bright-eyed promenades, or wandered in and out of the plant-draped Nuevo México Hotel, with its built-in shower baths, its dusky Indian chambermaids and its cool patios, or lolled in the dance pavilions on the bathing beaches fenced off from sharks and looked at the lazy low surf. About me shuttled dark folk in snow-white clothes and some not so snow-white, shirt-sleeves rolled up; garrulous, alert Spaniards, straw hats pushed back from hawk-like faces; the stranded sailors of all nations; the venders of tortoise-shell combs and some combs not so tortoise-shell.

2

Nature has built Mexico up like a Romanesque cathedral, already slightly modified by the Gothic and the Baroque. The train ascended to the capital through the long reach of jungle, the tall cocoanut palm groves, stretches of silver-green sugarcane, the town where the natives sell white gardenias plugged in bamboo cases. It wound up to Córdoba among jungle hills, climbed in loops up from the red tile roofs and checkerboard gardens of Maltrata toward the gleaming light on enormous, far mountains, slid into neat Orizaba and crossed the flat plateau with its miles of maguey plants in sandy loam, on past the massive pyramids of Teotihuacán to Mexico City.

The city of Aztec, Spaniard and what-not had changed. It

was tamer but more of a city; order, law, stability were more apparent. In three years it had grown prodigiously. The better residential districts had more than doubled in size. The suburbs were changing from semi-Indian rural communities to important middle-class residential towns. The creaking *carruajes*, with their dingy black hoods and narrow high seats and faded rugs, with their greasy coachmen behind spavin-legged accordion-ribbed nags with one hoof already in the bull-ring graveyard, had mostly given way to "chariots of fire" as poor, lavender-pale Henry James had wistfully called the modern automobile.

My first evening in Mexico City I spent at the Grand Hotel, a ramshackle place, shiny with tiles that reflected many memories of my previous life in the city. The next day—I was almost broke—I took quarters on Nuevo México and advertised for pupils wanting English lessons.

I found a letter from Huebsch. He praised the Italian book, but not in a position to bring out two volumes by me at the same time, he had generously sent the manuscript over to the Century Company. A letter of acceptance from them awaited me. Both books would be published in September. Opportunity was spreading its wings. I set to work to revise the manuscript of the Mexican book.

Immediate financial worries were solved for me by Roberto Haberman, at that time in charge of the language department of the public schools. He put me in charge of two English classes, one in Colonia Vallejo, a very poor district north of the city, the other in a large commercial school for girls. Also I gave lessons to Cholita González, the private secretary of Calles, at that time head of President Obregón's cabinet.

Never interested in teaching, nevertheless I liked my classes. Three times a week, at six o'clock in the morning, I went down to the Gobernación offices on Bucareli Avenue to give Cholita

two hours' instruction before General Calles showed up at eight.

Cholita was quite remarkable. When a very young girl, she had been secretary to Francisco Madero, and with him, later with Calles, she carried on in peace and war, however trying the circumstances; rode in box-cars, on horseback, bivouacked in camp, wherever the battle led. Calles had great confidence in her judgment as she had an uncanny capacity for sizing up people at a glance. If now plump, she was still very good-looking, with a broad, part-Indian countenance, olive complexion, a cloud of black hair falling over large eyes.

Each morning I bumped out in a crowded little bus to the Colonia Vallejo school, set among a weird collection of dumpy shacks and adobe huts. But the children were polite, eager to learn, never any problem of discipline as in an equally poor and tough American community. Years later, I ran into some of those children. Some had turned out moderately successful. Ten years later, one day in the street, one came running after me. He had set up a cabinet shop and told me his English helped him get quite a bit of foreign patronage.

The teachers, paid little more for a whole day's work than I was for a single class, were a fine, conscientious lot. One genial chap, on his slim salary, had raised two enormous families; by one wife eleven children; by the second, fourteen. Only fifty-four years of age, he already had thirty-two grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. An achievement. He would have been a hero in Italy where Mussolini bellyaches about overpopulation and gives premiums to big families.

One of the teachers, Refugio, nicknamed "Q.K."—a pretty, plump little thing with bright black hair and slightly bulging, anthracite eyes—took quite a fancy to me. She used to send me lilac notes, securely fastened in school-books by an elastic under the sealed flaps of the envelopes. We became quite well acquainted on several school picnics, one of them at the Xochi-

milco floating gardens, where we danced all one afternoon in a pavilion overlooking the water and the brightly decorated boats drifting on the dark tree-shadowed waters. Often thereafter she came over to my quarters in an old convent. In both physique and temperament she reminded me of softly rolling green hills; she was always sweet and gentle, something always smooth and lustrous about her.

One morning when I went out to Vallejo, I found one of the pulque shops had a bright new sign, celebrating the Dempsey-Firpo fight. The first reports the previous day had been that the Argentinean had won and, in his enthusiasm, the pulque shop owner, in the night, had climbed up and painted a new name on his establishment:

FIRPO GANÓ

FIRPO WON

And so, quite contrary to the official record, it remained for several years.

3

After a time I found delightful, if primitive, quarters in an ex-convent, several blocks down on the same street. My room looked out on a large patio, entered through a big barrel-arch. The former arches of the cells had long since been partly bricked up and set with modern double doors. It was nice on rainy days to watch the damp creep into the faded rose-colored calcimining and darken the gray crumbling stone fountain and listen to the sigh of the eucalyptus trees and the slosh of water from the gargoyles.

One night about eleven o'clock when I had just come in and was pulling off my shoes to go to bed, I heard pistol shots. Yanking my shoes back on, I rushed out, just in time to see them carrying out a man in a white robe from the offices of

Excelsior, the daily paper, across the street. Presently several other men were carried out.

I was looking upon the demise of the Ku Klux Klan in Mexico. Some arrogant little Mexican demagogue with an imitative nature decided to found a local white-robed organization. *Excelsior* had published an editorial deriding the project, humorously stating that since sheets and pillowcases had to be imported, their price was prohibitive for their being used for masquerade purposes, so that it was doubtful if the new movement would ever have a very large mass appeal.

The Ku Klux Klan decided that its first duty was to chastise the paper that had lampooned them. The only thing they neglected to remember was that many Mexicans carried guns and were not afraid to use them, and that this especially held for newspaper men, who had always to be on their guard against irate persons. The raid was staged with the result that the head of the Ku Klux Klan was carried out dead, and several other white-sheets seriously wounded. That put an end to organization in Mexico, for men who hide their identity in that fashion to commit depredations are essentially a sneaking, cowardly lot.

4

In the patio of the Secretariat of Education, Fred Leighton, representative of the Federated Press, introduced me to Diego Rivera, just beginning his frescos in the double patios—paintings which were to lead him up the ladder of world fame.

Diego, a big solid man, with an apparent infantile simplicity that belied his drive, vivid imagination, Machiavellian shrewdness and ruthless intrigue, seemed then merely to have great, ox-like patience. He had just completed his first three or four panels, the very decorative erect Tehuana figures and the Tehuantepec dyers and weavers. This work, though interesting and original, struck me at first as stiff but gradually, as he filled

up panel after panel, he gathered ease and power. The monumental scope of his effort, as he filled up three floors of walls around two great patios, soon indicated that here was being created the greatest art yet known in the Americas since the days of the Mayas and the Aztecs.

With the photographers, Edward Western and Tina Modotti and her sister, Mercedes, I went out to Chapingo agricultural school where Diego was also painting the entrance and staircase and the chapel now converted into an auditorium. There, in Chapingo, is the Sistine Chapel of the Americas. Diego has never surpassed this early work in Chapingo. It is by far the best he has ever done. Other frescos may surpass it in coloring, or in cleverness, or in a dozen minor ways, but here is his most organic synthesis; there, passion, intellect and technique have formed a holy trinity. Sensuous, simple and powerful, this work takes its place beside that of the Italian masters.

With Katherine Anne Porter, I went to see the frescoes in the national Preparatory School. The walls there revealed that Diego was not the only star in the firmament. Indeed his *Creation*, an encaustic mural in the auditorium, his first work on returning to Mexico after fifteen years or so of study abroad, is very imitative of European models, very stiff and affected, just plain bad, despite some redeeming features. His other work there is slightly better, but also imitative, particularly of Uccello. Uccello could have painted most of Diego's horses.

The work of José Clemente Orozco was like a powerful blow in the face with a fist. His *Maternity* has a vaguely imitative note, but is so strong it escapes into its own realm. There is also a hint of Goya's *caprichos* in the tortured distortion of Orozco's painting. This is not imitation, but the result of some similarity of temperament and outlook with the Spanish painter. Orozco's frescos in the Preparatory School are bitter, brutal, sardonically ferocious, caustically truthful up to the point

where violent exaggeration creates truth. His work always has the harsh relentlessness of a great spirit straining to smash through all conventions, all sham, even through the mystery of existence itself. His painting is far more emotional, less intellectual than Rivera's. Clemente's emotions have no restraint; they are as powerful as a tempest and have as little discipline. When he depicts hate, it is all hate combined into one lightning stroke; when it is pity, it is a pity that embraces all the wrongs of mankind; when it is justice, it is Jovian and awful. At his best he is far better than Rivera; at his worst, he is atrocious. Rivera is more conceptual, more disciplined; Orozco is more plastic, more passionate, more reckless. When Orozco hits it off, he strikes the Olympic note; when he tumbles over beyond his straining emotions, he hits only bathos and confusion.

This lack of artistic discipline, though it has made for great individualistic painting by Orozco, has accentuated one of his basic defects as a fresco painter; his paintings rarely correlate with the architecture and purpose of the buildings where they are painted. Great fresco painting must have a co-operative note; it must reciprocate with the architects and designers to gain its maximum effect. In this respect Rivera never falters.

This can be seen in recent paintings in the Palace of Fine Arts where frescos of Diego and Clemente face each other on two sides of a stair landing. Rivera's painting there is a modified (but inferior) reproduction of what was destroyed in Rockefeller Center. It is also artistically inferior to Orozco's fresco. Orozco here indulges his most ferocious emotions, his greatest hates, his explosive satire in red and crimson. The details are as powerful, as moving, as any painter has produced. And yet, as a whole, it fails. It fails because it has neglected architectural demands. It is impossible to look at Orozco's painting from a distance because, blurred into a hodgepodge of bright flame, it is further carved up by interposing columns. To see it, one

must come close; then the effect is marred because one must stand too close; and if details grip one, the sense of wholeness disappears. Though far better than Diego's fresco, Orozco's work is obscured and partly lost. Rivera, if his theme is more banal, more intellectualized, in large part subordinated to partisan and petty themes, largely anecdotal rather than symbolical, nevertheless makes the most of the architectural arrangement. From whatever angle his fresco is viewed, it stands out perfectly; the eye receives a perfect composition in each case, even if part of the work be hidden. Rivera converts the very handicaps of architecture into assets.

Rivera, also, is a greater colorist than Orozco. Essentially Orozco is a black and white artist. Even when he uses the most vivid reds and blues, in some curious way they are all subdued to a black-white composition. His forte is in extremes, sharp contrasts; the nuances in between, rather than building up complexity, merely reinforce the contrast. His colors shuttle into two extreme polarities.

Too often, too, Orozco, in his straining to overreach his own capacities, creates in the beholder merely a consciousness of Orozco's own desire to express great and savage emotions. The artist's personal agonies should not directly intrude. Great art is not a straining at emotion but produces the desired emotion in the beholder.

As a man, Orozco, far more likable than Rivera, has never resorted to the intrigues and double-crossing that have marred Rivera's career. Orozco is a deeply embittered soul; a veritable glare comes from behind the very thick lenses of his glasses. He is one-armed; his body has a tortured twist. But in personal relations Orozco is never bitter. He is the kindest man I know, solicitous toward other folk, warmly compassionate.

He hates the United States immeasurably. His early work, not sufficiently academic, was derided in Mexico. Disheartened,

he decided to go to the United States where artistic experimentation seemed to have more of a chance. But at the American border a comprehensive set of drawings was seized in the customs and declared indecent. They were torn up and ground under the feet of our outraged officials, who in those days of contempt for Mexico saw no reason for being considerate of any Mexican, and least of all an artist with dubious drawings. Only half a dozen of those early drawings—the House of Tears series—survived, and they are among the finest things Orozco has ever produced. That we have no more of them is due to our stupid laws and our provincial intolerance.

Many other artists were at work, and constant experimentation in new forms, in mural techniques lost for centuries, made Mexico an exciting and doubly significant place. The fact was, Mexico was deepening. The revolution had gathered content, purpose and assurance. New forces were awakening, and this new art movement then gathering momentum was indicative of a country freshly discovering its potentialities.

5

Four surgical operations kept me horizontal for some weeks, but did not appreciably stay my enjoyment of things. Maurice Becker, the painter, his wife Dorothy Baldwin, several others and myself liked to go to the *Salón Azteca*, a beer dance hall for poorer Indians. There came chauffeurs, menial employees, servant girls, factory workers, together with a lot of underworld riff-raff. It was a bizarre place, a big perspiring hall of shabby folk, though the girls, however stained their hands from scrubbing floors or wrapping soap or filling cartridges at the national munitions works, usually managed to dress up with cheap rayon beaded dresses, clockwork stockings and fancy bow garters, and put plenty of grease in their shiny black hair.

A policeman at the entrance always patted one's hips for a

gun. Of course those who wanted to come armed merely had their girls carry in their guns under their skirts.

At that time the queen of the place was a beautiful Mexican-French girl with a fleur-de-lis tattooing on one bare shoulder in the best style of Dumas. Usually her new male favorite, it was said, won his place with her by a knife fight.

However free the language, outwardly the hall was well-mannered, the tone of speech always courteous—in strange contrast to the open rowdyism that features similar places in the United States. Undoubtedly passions and trouble lurked just under the surface; shooting affrays had occurred there, but the Mexican, even of the lowest class, even if about to shoot or use the knife, rarely forgets his poise, his smile, his polite speech—at least till the dread moment comes.

One night two girls got into an altercation over a man. They borrowed pistols and went out to a lonely spot on the outskirts of the city to stage a formal duel. There, seconds paced off the distance, and the two girls turned and shot their guns empty without hitting each other. Not content, they pulled out knives. By the time the police arrived, the girls had slashed each other to ribbons.

With Teté, an unusually pretty Indian girl who worked in the munitions factory and with whom I had danced in the Salón one night, I made a date to go to the Santa Anita flower festival on the canal the coming "Saturday of Glory."

But those days the Mexican government was still very hard up, so our pay, very irregular, sometimes was delayed a whole month. Quite broke when Saturday of Glory rolled around, I had to stand Teté up. I never saw her again. For some reason, I have always deeply regretted that lost day—Saturday of Glory, the day before Easter and at the beautiful festival of Santa Anita. I have been to the festival many times, long before it

became a tawdry tourist affair, but of course never enjoyed myself as I should have with little Teté.

Those hard times we were often obliged to borrow small amounts from each other. Once when I was walking down the street with Paul Higgins, the painter, and Frances Toor, who later founded *Mexican Folkways*, Frances, a solidly built woman, accidentally kicked a barefoot Indian in the ankle. He danced off with a painful grimace, holding his foot.

Remorseful, she opened her purse and gave him fifty centavos. His eyes glistened happily. Immediately he forgot about his injured ankle.

Paul and I, quite bankrupt, groaned dismally at such unwarranted generosity and then and there leaned up against the wall and begged Frances to give us each a good kick in the ankles.

6

José Vasconcelos, Minister of Education, invited D. H. Lawrence, Witter Bynner, Roberto Haberman and myself to a luncheon at El Globo. At the last minute Vasconcelos, called to an emergency cabinet meeting, had to postpone the luncheon till the following day.

D. H. Lawrence was then living in a smelly Italian hostelry, the Monte Carlo on Uruguay Street, beside the National Library. He was a thin man, with a body that seemed about to fall into pieces; his face was pasty, expressionless, but his greenish eyes glared from out his pale red beard with curious satyr-like luster. On hearing of the postponement of the luncheon, he flew into a dreadful rage—everything sent him into convulsive loss of self-control, quite un-English, but he was already suffering from incurable consumption. Did anyone, he now demanded, imagine that for one minute he was going to stand on his ear for a two-by-four cabinet minister in a hick country

like Mexico? Not on your life. He fumed and frothed and never did show up at the luncheon.

One of his choice remarks was that his books didn't sell in England, only in America. "But the few Englishmen who do read me, at least understand me."

As did most persons—except neurotic females seeking restless freedom—I soon detested him personally, although I could understand many of his difficulties. Several times I took a young newspaper man who idolized him up to the Monte Carlo. On the second visit, just as we were leaving, Lawrence, ignoring the newspaper man, said loudly, "Don't bring him up any more. I've got all I can out of him."

"Don't worry," I replied in a pet. "Nor shall I bring myself up again."

Once, when D. H. came into the hotel room, his wife Freda, a fine handsome woman, one of those Teutonic types that remind me of delicious home-made bread, a woman of great poise, calm and breeding, was talking to a woman friend.

Lawrence began to rail at her over something or other. She paid no attention. Finally, his face purple, he screamed at her: "Why do you sit with your legs apart that way? You're just like all the other dirty sluts."

She completely ignored him and his outburst and went on talking quietly, without a flutter of annoyance. Her passivity merely incensed him the more; he literally frothed at the mouth and flounced out. Undoubtedly, being a very sick man, he was greatly frustrated physically and psychologically by her full, healthy body and poise. I thought Freda, with whom I went one day to look at the cathedral and Diego's frescos, a grand human being; but Lawrence, for all his genius which I greatly admire, I considered a detestable one.

Lawrence was incapable of doing other than creating a deep love-hate relation with women, but I have an idea that Freda,

in her quiet subterranean way, found means of compensating herself for his numerous spleens and infidelities, putting on the horns, as Mexicans say.

Whatever he did is atoned for, if by nothing else, by his great book *Sons and Lovers*. Other of his works may have more exquisite beauty, but none can compare to it in organization, intensity or masterful simplicity.

Lawrence valiantly tried to get away from English smugness, sex-tabus and social climbing. He never did. He tried to be a free pagan. But his own mind and body were against him. For years he was a sick man, clinging to the fringe of life, simulating great fury and gusto. And his paganism, far from healthy, even has a prurient quality. It is more like that of a self-conscious child who sticks a toe fearsomely into the edge of a mud puddle, then draws it out hurriedly and weeps to find it covered with slime.

As for Mexico, Lawrence never understood it. At bottom he was terribly afraid of the country, always saw some secret menace in it. He was ever too frightened and neurotic really to examine the things that built up such a great fear in him; he could only dissect his own emotions about them. Hence his *Plumed Serpent* is a remarkably intuitive book, with magnificent descriptions, and a weird insight into many matters that Lawrence sensed rather than understood. The same fear-note and bafflement carried on through his *Mornings in Mexico*. What Lawrence did was to write a big, insoluble, mysterious "X," in a super-tourist fashion, over the Mexican Indian. The novelist is forever rushing past closed doors and conjuring up all sorts of horrible mystery and despair and danger lurking behind them. His neurotic character made it impossible for him to knock and perchance discover, however poverty-stricken the setting, merely a warm hospitality and simple folk facing life's problems as most normal people face them. What

Lawrence did was to shoot the skyrockets of his morbid fancy over Mexico, and in the long glimmer of showering sparks he caught remarkable glimpses of the land, glimpses so strange, so fantastic and distorted, yet sometimes so grandiosely true as to make one wonder at the eerie quality of his genius.

MURDER IN THE CAPITAL

MY RETURN TO MEXICO COINCIDED with another troubled political moment. Obregón's term was coming to an end, elections were nearing, and revolt was in the offing.

I met Obregón for the first time at a reception up on the *terrazza* of Chapultepec Castle. Minus his right arm, lost in the battle of Celaya against Villa, when he shook hands he had to twist his left hand and arm around backwards. And so, when introduced, I put out my left hand, thus making a natural if left-handed shake.

He looked at me hard, with a slight scowl, though previously he had displayed customary joviality. Several times, during the reunion, he glanced at me with the same hard speculative stare.

Later, I learned that he disliked people who proffered the left hand. He considered it back luck. This may have been merely a self-preservation reflex by a man constantly in danger of being assassinated, who eventually was assassinated by a Catholic fanatic. Anyone proffering his left hand kept his own right hand free, while Obregón's only hand was clutched, a temporary physical advantage.

Obregón, a stocky man of medium height, with a rubicund Irish-looking politician's face, was always full of quips and engaging off-color yarns, which he did not hesitate to spring at the most sedate mixed diplomatic functions. In the darkest adversity, he was always jovial, a bright sally ever on his lips.

He had wily tricks. Once, when things were rocky, he pre-

tended serious illness, refused to see anybody except intimate friends, whom he received in disattire. As with all prominent men there were the customary rumors of his being afflicted with every sort of secret ailment. Now, hearing of his illness, enemy politicians and generals at once started plotting in the open. Obregón immediately became well and lopped off their heads.

Once I was with a friend of mine making newsreels of some ceremony in the Chapultepec gardens. Obregón strolled over—he had no guards—and asked with a grin how much an assistant was paid.

“Not much. Three pesos a day.”

“Well, keep the job open for me. I don’t know just how long I’ll be sitting up there.” He waved his left hand at the castle above us and grinned.

On another occasion I was sitting with a girl in the little ice-cream kiosk in Chapultepec Park when President Obregón and a companion appeared at the door, unaccompanied by any guard.

As all tables were full, they started to turn away unnoticed. I jumped up, reintroduced myself and offered him our table.

He was quite pleased. “Surely. But you must not go. We will share it.”

Once, riding in his limousine down the main street, after having put down the De la Huerta revolt, Obregón happened to see a rebel colonel unconcernedly strolling in civilian clothes. Obregón jumped out. Accosting the colonel good-naturedly, he invited him to ride with him in his car. The colonel, a bit suspicious, declined.

“Oh, yes, you will,” said the President, poking his gun into the colonel’s ribs. “Get in.”

Personally he drove the offender out to the Santiago military prison.

Obregón was the military genius of the revolution. Pancho Villa never knew anything but wild dervish mass attack. But Obregón, who never got drawn into any engagement until sure of victory, knew how to plan and carry out, not only a battle but a complicated campaign. His advance on the eastern front against General Estrada, when the latter controlled Guadalajara, his use of a flying base and cavalry flanks, was masterly.

2

Adolfo de la Huerta, who in 1920 had acted as provisional President following the success of the Revindicating Revolution, had been bitten anew by the presidential bug and was lavishly using government funds and patronage to build up a personal political machine.

I had met him very briefly in a mixed gathering. A former café singer and music teacher from Sonora, he was a weak, if likable personality, a man largely made by his betters, but clever and insinuating, dark and sleek. He was plump, soft of flesh, nebulous of feature and suave of voice. He had a Jesuitical note. So far as I know his personal life was exemplary, but a vapor of secret, perfumed vice emanated from him. One was surprised to find his hand clasp so firm, though there was perspiration on the palm.

In due time the De la Huerta forces were pushed into open revolt. The plotters had planned to seize Obregón and Calles at a public fair, execute them and gain power by a simple military coup. Their plot fell through. And so, toward the end of 1923, De la Huerta's followers, General Estrada in Guadalajara, tool of fiery Archbishop Jiménez Orozco, and General Guadalupe Sánchez, who had previously betrayed Carranza, revolted, one in the east, the other in Vera Cruz.

José Vasconcelos, though he didn't abandon his cabinet post, sympathized with the rebels. Most of his intimate friends and

advisers hastened off to the revolution. Other high-ups, such as Juan Field Jurado, President of the Senate, were almost openly in favor of the rebels rather than the government from which they continued to receive their salaries.

Obregón faced a most serious uprising. Soon the rebels were winning important victories on both fronts. Calles, Obregón's choice as a presidential successor and entirely loyal to him, hurried north to San Luis Potosí with elements from the CROM, the labor organization, to raise volunteer labor and peasant battalions as a reserve in case the two rebel forces closed in on the capital. The Obregón government, though it had popular support, the backing of most labor and peasant forces, and of the United States, was certainly in a nut-cracker. It was an army-bureaucratic-clerical reaction, and general after general was turning traitor.

General Maycote came to the capital, interviewed Obregón, was given enormous supplies and money, went back to the front and promptly turned over to the rebels, seizing Puebla, the third largest city of the republic, only a few hours from Mexico City.

A hurried all-night cabinet session was held as to whether to move the government out of Mexico City, much as Carranza had done. But Obregón was determined to fight it out. He rushed from one front to the other, gradually building up strong defenses till he could take the initiative. Occasionally he stopped in between battles in the capital to straighten things out.

The anecdote is told how one night, when sleeping at Chapultepec, his wife said, "Alvaro, I'm going to turn over."

Half asleep, he bolted upright in bed and exclaimed, "You, too, dear!"

As the revolt progressed the treacherous elements in the capital itself, including Vasconcelos, Juan Field Jurado and many Congressmen and Senators, hiding behind their immunity, be-

came more and more open in their sympathies and aid to the revolvers. Juan Field Jurado in the Senate was blocking the ratification of the bill to establish the Joint Claims Commission demanded by the United States. The government was very anxious at this critical juncture to do everything possible to retain American friendship and get more arms from us—which it did.

The friendliness of the United States was the result of the Warren-Payne agreement finished shortly before, by which we had managed to force Obregón to accede to us on many important matters pending between the two countries. I met Warren when he was in Mexico—a flat-tire politician appointed by Harding, but a decent sort, the first of our diplomats to try to understand Mexico's problems rather than pettily heave brickbats as Sheffield later did.

However, my interview with Warren did not go very well. I asked him what we wanted of Mexico.

Drawing himself up pompously in the best Great Statesman style, he said in a deep, impressive tone, hand on his breast:

"We merely wish Mexico to abide by international law just as we expect to abide by international law in Latin America."

"That will be quite a change of policy for us, won't it?" I asked in a soothing tone.

He froze up. That ended the interview.

3

One Sunday I went to a theater to hear a prominent labor leader, high-up member of the government, speak on the revolt.

"Our comrades," he shouted, "are dying in the trenches. The workers cannot remain idle and indifferent; they will know how to use direct action against all the enemies of the government, no matter how high their position, whether members

of the cabinet or of the Senate"—thrusts at Vasconcelos and Juan Field Jurado. Presently armed thugs, said to have been posted by this labor leader, appeared in the patio of the Secretariat of Education to intimidate Vasconcelos.

The New York *Nation* asked me to do an article on the worker and peasant volunteers the government was mobilizing in special battalions, so I called upon this labor leader for information. Though I already knew him, I got one of his most intimate followers to go with me so I might gain immediate admission.

While we were there, his secretary brought in a telegram. It was from Senator Juan Field Jurado. The man I was interviewing smiled wryly, then read it aloud. Field Jurado stated that he knew to whom the labor leader's threats the previous Sunday were directed, but that he would stay right at his post, "until the victorious armies of De la Huerta enter the capital," that, as usual, he would enter the Senate Chamber the following afternoon at four o'clock.

The labor leader spoke to his secretary. Presently two of the hardest boiled thugs I ever saw came in, guns at the hip. The labor leader showed them Field Jurado's telegram.

"Do you know what to do?" he asked. "Then go do it."

I was horrified. I had no sympathy with Field Jurado's attitude, but there were other ways to deal with him.

Perplexed, I walked the streets, finally went to the Hotel Regis lobby and called the Senate. Field Jurado was not in. Next I tried his house. A woman answered. Field Jurado was not there. I asked to speak to some responsible member of his family. Another woman came to the phone.

"Listen carefully," I said. "What I have to say is a matter of life and death. This morning the Senator sent a defiant telegram to a certain member of the government. There will be violent consequences. His life is in grave danger. If you value

his life, do not permit him to go to the Senate tomorrow. If he does, he will be shot down. He may be killed anyway."

Apparently Field Jurado did not go to the Senate. When I anxiously scanned the papers two mornings later, there was no news of his having been killed.

I had another appointment with the labor leader that evening—he had promised full details, photographs, and a pass to the training camps.

Again there was an odd coincidence. His secretary came in and whispered agitatedly. The labor leader gave me a sharp glance, then said, "Send them in." The same two thugs appeared.

They had done the deed. Field Jurado had been shot down on his doorstep by two armed gangs in automobiles.

Now, they calmly discussed where the two malefactors had better hide out until the matter blew over. One was given money to go off to Yucatán, via Tampico.

I went cold at the pit of my stomach and left as soon as I could. I never wrote the article about labor and peasant volunteers.

The following morning the papers carried news not only of the murder of Field Jurado but of the sequestration of six Congressmen, also opposed to the Claims Commission Law.

And so the rebel minority in the Senate, blocking a two-thirds vote, was broken; so the bill was passed authorizing the setting up of a Joint Claims Commission between the United States and Mexico. Such is the dark stench behind diplomacy. Americans who eventually get their claims will receive money baptized in the blood of Senator Juan Field Jurado, money obtained through murder and gangster kidnaping. These things were done precisely to bring to pass something desired by the United States.

4

About this time, when the government seemed on the brink of collapse, I went with Luis N. Morones, head of the Mexican Labor Party, and other officials to Atzacapotzalco to a barbecue. I was amazed at his nonchalance and that of government officials around him. The enemy was hammering close to the gates of the capital, yet here leaders of the government calmly lolled the afternoon away under the trees, eating, drinking pulque, playing cards. I could not decide whether such neglect of official duties at such a time meant the rebels would win, or whether this apparent confidence was an indication the government was so strong the revolt was doomed. Perhaps having the backing of our State Department and receiving plenty of arms from us, they did not have to worry. The later Morrow intervention in Mexico was already being prepared in 1923-24.

Soon the tide turned definitely in favor of Obregón. The rebels were driven out of the important state of Puebla.

As the civil authorities there had sided with the rebels, they fled before the government troops. In front of the national munitions works I ran into Lombardo Toledano, then a recent graduate from the University of Mexico, who had thrown in his lot with Morones. Lombardo was strapping on a gun to motor down to Puebla posthaste and take over the governorship. Morones told him that Obregón had promised a certain number of governorships to the Labor Party and for Lombardo to get on the ground floor and take charge and he would get the appointment ratified with the President.

Lombardo was then only about twenty-six, a lean, sallow chap, somewhat sickly looking but provided with a superabundance of energy. He made a good governor, and within ten years he was to undermine Morones' position and himself seize control of the Mexican labor movement.

BANDITS IN AMECAMECA

TO GET THE TASTE OF THE FIELD Jurado killing out of my mouth, I went up to the little town at the foot of the volcanoes—Amecameca—with the idea of climbing Popocatepetl and Ixtacihuatl, the two snow volcanoes that tower seventeen hundred feet above the level of the sea, the third and fourth highest mountains on the continent.

Amecameca is a delightful little adobe town of gurgling streams, colonial arches, old churches and cornfields. The little plaza, with its clumped evergreen trees, lies between two rows of stores, the much battered old Spanish town hall, and the triple arch of the main church, usually called "the cathedral."

Before the triple arch are little stands and an open-air market. There, one can sit down at the little eating booths, lit by flaming ocote torches; and nothing is quite so good at that high altitude, when night falls so cold, as a little glass of warm vermouth, drunk in a ring of dusky, mysterious Indian faces, mantled to the nose in sarapes.

The two volcanoes towering white and chaste into the south-land sky, usually clear as taut silk, are, despite their massive immobility, ever alive with changing tints, and after dark linger as rifts of white suspended in a sea of darkness; in the clear morning hours they seem close enough to be touched by the hand. At night, high up on the mountains shine the lone fires of the charcoal kilns, and these too seem points of flame suspended in a dark vacuum; they are a sort of echo to the cheery

bonfires lit in the plaza from the refuse of the day's marketing, and beside them the Indian venders curl up for the night on their straw *petates*.

On the other side of the town, two churches and a row of evergreens lift against the western sky, and in an old Campo Santo a hundred spectral crosses tilt drunkenly at as many stars.

Besides wandering around the town talking to the market people and tradesmen, I was finishing up a novel, published later as *Destroying Victor*, which I had started in Italy and had had to lay aside.

I was also rather amusedly dividing my attentions among the petulant pretty actress of a stranded theater troupe, the sister of the innkeeper and the giggling Indian waitress, who ran in and out barefoot, bringing our food to the sunny tables out under the patio trees.

The mother of the little waitress, herself a handsome young woman, suggested I take her and her daughter to Mexico; she herself would be my housekeeper. The sister, who was also the schoolteacher, suggested that a man was needed to help out in the hotel business, that undoubtedly I would attract many foreigners. The actress fortunately did not suggest that I go on the stage.

One day I went on horseback northeast along the foothills of Ixtaccihuatl to visit an Indian fiesta. The road was busy with the coming and going of muleteers, lumbermen and charcoal venders. Little burros plodded down the well-worn road, dragging huge timbers tied on either side of their shoulders. I had no idea anything out of the way could happen to me.

I failed to branch off at the right place. Before retracing my way, I climbed up on the mesa to look across the magnificent panorama of the far-flung valley and the lofty volcanoes covered with snow. The country close about was without houses,

very jejune, scarcely covered with scrub pines and oaks and cactus and a few false pepper trees.

On my return, the road dipped down between high banks. Suddenly I found myself looking into the muzzle of a rifle held by a bandit with a red kerchief over the lower part of his face.

Told to dismount and leave my horse, I was forced to climb up the steep break in the bank. Two other men with guns waited there.

I had a brief notion to grapple with the man who first held me up as we clambered up the bank. We would have rolled down the steep embankment together. But I was not at all sure I might not be potted first by the other two men above, nor could I be certain that passing muleteers, mostly simple Indian folk ever anxious of keeping out of trouble, would come to my rescue.

And so I obeyed orders. My assailants took me across the mesa to a small ravine. They laid aside their guns, and the young fellow, evidently in charge, held a big knife to my throat while the other two searched me.

One squat, pock-marked fellow in a worn red sweater wanted to throw me to the buzzards then and there. "Put an end to him," he growled several times. "Then he won't go around talking."

The younger man told him sharply to shut up, and to me said, "Don't be frightened. Don't shake." He smiled and emphasized his kindly reassurance by shaking the knife vigorously in front of my throat.

They searched me twice, finding only a few pesos. This made them angry. They looked through my wallet, found nothing, but took my fountain pen, pencil and pocket-knife. Presently, in addition to the silver pesos, they came upon forty pesos in gold in my watch pocket. After that they were more cordial.

They complained bitterly that I had neither pistol nor watch.

I told them I never carried a pistol and that my watch was being repaired, but that they could have the receipt for it.

"No, no," the young chap said, with a trace of alarm. "We don't want any papers."

They made me take off my sweater and belt and debated taking my shirt.

I began to argue. They had asked me several times whether I worked on a big hacienda near by. I assured them I didn't even know where it was. They told me that was lucky; if I had had any connection with it, they would either cut me to ribbons or carry me off for ransom.

Evidently they had some primitive Robin Hood ideas of justice. I now argued that I was a poor man, that they should not take my shirt; it was the only one I had in the world. How could I get to Mexico City without a shirt?

They finally left me with my shirt and the rest of my clothes. Emboldened, I told them they had taken every cent I possessed in the world. I had no friends in Amecameca. They ought to give me enough to pay my fare back to the city.

They assured me if I said I had been held up, anybody would give me my fare back.

As I kept on arguing, the young chap suggested that perhaps I would prefer going on up the ravine into the mountains to see their chief. "Maybe if you tell him your story, he will give you your things back."

I had very pressing engagements in town. They laughed and let me go.

When I was about fifty yards down a path, the leader called to me: "Say, got any postage stamps? I'd like to write to my sweetheart."

I went back and gave them the few I had. With that the young fellow shook hands with me, the others followed suit.

"Good-by, chief," they called after me.

Once out of their sight, I ran all the way into town to the police station. The police official showed little concern. I suggested that a few good horsemen could head the bandits off, but he shilly-shallied around. "We have no horses."

They could have been obtained in a few minutes in the plaza but, no, they couldn't do that. Finally he detailed five shambling Indians to go along with me on foot to the spot. They were so anxious not to get there, I walked off from them at the first corner.

Two weeks later—I was back in Mexico City—a letter was forwarded from the Amecameca police-department, advising me to call immediately at the municipal palace so they could investigate the robbery which I had stated had occurred.

Fortunately I was not in Amecameca or most likely I would have been charged with robbing myself.

2

The afternoon of the robbery I was invited by the teacher to attend the opening of a private school, a ceremony to be followed by a dance. It was, I discovered, a disguised Catholic school, although since 1857 elementary religious schools had been forbidden by law.

My personal difficulty on this occasion resulted from the fact that, the bandits having stolen my belt, my trousers were a bit loose around the waist and needed constant tugs lest they fall down.

The teacher and I took seats on the front row. Above us, on a high platform, decorated with a picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe and several flags, were assembling the dignitaries who were to dedicate the school. A ring of straight-backed chairs stood about a speakers' table.

The mayor stalked in, a big fellow with an enormous black

beard, in high leather boots. He glanced over the scene in a proprietary fashion. His eye fell on me.

"Come up to the platform," he said in a mandatory tone.

I declined, saying I was only a visitor.

"Nonsense," he boomed. "These seats"—he waved his hand airily over the assembled townsfolk—"are for women and people who don't count."

Having most of my life been scornfully treated by headwaiters, concierges, customs and immigration officials, I now felt a great inferiority complex evaporating from my soul.

There was nothing to do but accompany him to the platform and be introduced to everybody there. An enormous white candle five feet high and as big around as my wrist was thrust into my hand. By some shift, I found myself on the outer chair, quite exposed to the view of the audience.

It was all right sitting down, but when we had to stand up while the school was being blessed, and the priest threw holy water around, I had to hang on to my trousers with one hand and the lit candle, dripping hot wax, with the other.

It was over at last. Glasses of fiery tequila were served us, and my companion, the schoolteacher, and several other women were then called forward to join in the toasting.

The music started up. The floor was cleared for dancing.

It was not very successful. I would dance around once, then would have to stop to haul up my trousers. But it struck us as funny. Soon everybody knew I had been held up by bandits, that I was likely to lose my pants at any moment.

There was a dance in the town hall that evening, and the schoolteacher wanted me to take her. I demurred. I could not forever go around hauling at my trousers.

Forthwith she led me to the general merchandise store to buy me a belt. A good belt was expensive. I compromised on a pair of red and black suspenders.

3

Another interesting trip I took with quite a group of friends up to Toluca, where we visited the colorful Sunday basket and sarape markets, and then went on to a village fiesta in the hills.

In the party was a very handsome girl, on the Junoesque order: Maya, sister of one of Mexico's prominent painters. She had a full florid face, very mobile and plastic, with a tangle of dark hair over her low brow and sultry, dreamy eyes. Though large of body, she was supple and free-limbed. We immediately struck up a friendship and escaped from the others to drink some of the famous Toluca dark beer, Saturno.

Out in the village we explored the thatched and adobe lanes lined with organ cactus, went boating on the tiny lake among the black swans, around and around the shores clustered with bright-colored booths, went down into the vaults of the old convent. And there, in the moist light, our hands crept together and Maya was in my arms.

We danced together in a little restaurant to the tune of native banjo and drum music.

Maya exclaimed, as we danced, "Why, all the others are just sticks. Stiff sticks. They don't know how to live. We are the only ones afire with life, not afraid of life."

It was a happy, yet oddly melancholy ride back to Mexico City, three hours through a driving tropic storm. Maya got out at her home on Ayuntamiento Street in the wet; the rain was pelting down in sheets dancing white on the curbstone.

There in the wet, she hesitated a second, shrugged, then dashed indoors without so much as a farewell to me.

That's that, I said to myself and forgot about it.

Three weeks later, one evening, I heard a knock at my door in the old convent, and there stood Maya in a simple black dress, a red rose in her shiny black hair.

Maya, though physically so handsome and impressive, was a very difficult person, never happy unless she could create an emotional tension, strangely temperamental always, at times full of wild joyous abandon and almost animal-like fierceness, at other times silent and moody, or again cold and spiteful.

SERENADE OF DEATH

MEXICO, FOR MOST CASUAL VISITORS, is a land to be seen, smelled, tasted. The barrier of language and briefness of stay reduce such visitors to the common denominator of sense impression. This has its advantages, for Mexico's most vital message for the casual outsider is aesthetic. But to fit the taste of a mango, the color of a sarape, the smell of open-air pig-grease kitchens into an intelligible scheme of life; or to reconstruct from such details the pattern of social organization or the psychology of a whole people—this indeed requires rare imagination.

For me, thanks to fortunate training and experience and long residence, Mexico has been a land to be experienced in every possible form, not merely through sense impression. There are many Mexicos. And whatever my own capacities for observation, invariably I have seen a different Mexico according to my company. I have seen it through the eyes of Indians, anthropologists, ornithologists, priests, school inspectors, tax-collectors, bandits, generals, politicians, Armenian peddlers, artists—respectable and disreputable people of all sorts. On this occasion the Baron Szilard von Kluckhorn gave everything an entirely new flavor.

I do not know why a wandering European aristocrat but a short time in the country should have been able to provide any particular insight, but perhaps because he came from old Europe with definitely formed criteria, he fitted into interstices of the local scene in a way different than any American would.

He had both a superciliousness toward Mexico and a genial human acceptance of it. He was not supercilious as an American is, because of its relative lack of modern technical equipment and sanitation. He did not fly into a rage over the leisureliness of a clerk, the lack of Grade A milk, the limited number of bathtubs. Nor was he impressed, as an American invariably is, by old churches and ruins. His own country was older, had more magnificent churches, more ancient buildings. Nor was he shocked, as is an American, by class divisions and Indian poverty. What annoyed him far more were uncouth local manners, the exaggerated affectation of Mexican politeness, the shallowness of most intellectual circles. But, having discovered all this, he accepted all its life as a human being, in fact in far more democratic fashion than would most Americans troubled with feelings of race, rather than class, superiority. Perhaps this was also partly due to the fact that he had a small independent income and no specific purpose in life.

More likely it was because the Baron was an unusual, adventurous soul. He had the tall, erect bearing of his Prussian army training plus great sensitivity, Teutonic melancholy overlaid with rigid discipline and cold-blooded ruthlessness. Apparently his limited funds had made it impossible for him to function properly in his own high circles in Europe or to recoup his fortune there by marriage, for such chances were slim following the disasters of the War and the post-war period. He might, he thought vaguely at times, seek an American heiress, but basically the idea repelled him. He preferred, he had about decided, to follow the dictates of his own heart in everything and lay aside forever his old class inhibitions.

But he was, he told me over a gin and vermouth in Bach's gay little basement bar, a ruined man, a man with an unalterable obsession that held him in unbreakable chains. Now he was wandering over the face of the earth trying to forget. I was

not long in surmising that a woman plagued him. But the more he wandered, the more he remembered her. He would never be free and happy again until he could completely forget her.

"Trying to forget"—I put forth callow philosophy—"is the best way to remember. Recall the old adage, 'A new nail drives out the old.'"

He told me the story. He, a German baron, of one of the proudest families in the land, had fallen in love with Brunhilda, a girl who excelled all other women, be sure of that, but who had the disgrace to be a Communist. To all his advances, she replied with scorn for his breeding, his birth, and his money, said they were an insurmountable bar to their union. I judged he had rather liked experiencing her open contempt for all that he had long been taught was superior. The more she spurned him, the more importunate he became. She told him that in no case could she marry; her heart was in the cause.

Still he persisted. One day she finally hinted that she might relent if he volunteered for a dangerous task. The Spartacist revolt was about to flare up. If he and two other men would assault a dangerous key outpost, a deed which meant inevitable death, her feelings toward him might change. He agreed at once.

All the night before the attack they were together. He left in the foggy dawn to go to his doom. His two companions were dying for the cause; he was dying for a woman.

At the crucial moment, just as the machine-gun fire swept over them, he tripped and fell. His two companions were blown to bits; he did not even scratch his hands. In the excitement, he escaped.

It broke up the romance completely. The girl upbraided him hotly. She, too, had made a sacrifice for him. His not dying had made her sacrifice all in vain. "Curious the way women reason," lamented the Baron. And when the revolt finally col-

lapsed Brunhilda heaped all the blame on him, made him a symbol of the failure. It had failed precisely because he was not killed. She drove him from her side harshly.

2

Since then he had visited nearly every country on the face of the globe trying to forget her, and couldn't. Here he was in Mexico, not a tourist, not as a man trying to make his home, but a disembodied soul suspended in the ether of his own grief.

Our friendship ripened. An omnivorous reader, he brought me books. Spengler became his great guide—"the most marvelous mind Europe has produced in a generation." He was disappointed that I could not share his enthusiasm.

Numbers of times I ran into him in the company of women—but always a different one. Out at the pyramids of Teotihuacán we clambered up the steep steps to the summit overlooking the checkerboard of maguey fields, with Freda, a winsome, brooding Swedish girl, who believed ardently in theosophy and surveyed the universe with celestial blue eyes of calm conviction.

She was thrilled by the ferocious carved stone snake-heads; she was thrilled by the carved hands in the dark passageways in the bowls of the Pyramid of the Sun; she was thrilled by the traces of ancient fresco—plumed ocher warriors in a frieze—near the Pyramid of the Moon. Everything corroborated her faith in her doctrines of Americanized mystic Orientalism.

"Think," groaned the Baron when I was alone with him, "all of life she would be looking at snakes' heads theosophically and I would be looking at them Spenglerishly, interpreting their beauty in the light of the cyclic fatalism of human tragedy."

"The difference," I retorted, "does not seem so vast as the gulf between the ideas of you and Brunhilda."

A certain amount of probing revealed that the real reason for his failure to appreciate Freda was the peculiarly perfect

shape of Brunhilda's chin and nose as compared to Freda's. And soul—"Soul," declaimed the Baron, "is something apart from the ideas of philosophies in which it may be clothed."

Through the Xochimilco canals we floated in a native dug-out with Helen, an American girl, who rose out of a green dress like a poised white lily, all grace and swank elegance, self-assurance, and enthusiasm. She was slim and aglow with health and sarcastically doubtful of the Baron's good intentions.

"How is Helen?" I asked him several days later at the bullfight. We had just settled back into our seats in the *sombra* with a gasp of relief as Gaona whirled his red cape and self thrillingly out of the rush of the bull's horns.

He shrugged. "She knows too much and too little." His lips drooped. He proffered me his silver monogrammed cigarette case, with its baronial coat-of-arms. "She is a very efficient little body, but lacking in subtlety, either intellectual or emotional." From his prior account of Brunhilda, I had not been impressed that subtlety was one of her outstanding traits. But she was still "the obsession."

In Amecameca, at the foot of the volcanoes, I discovered him sitting on a plaza bench with Giaconda, an Italian girl. She had a fluffy mass of black curls about a doll-like olive face. They were drinking in the beauty of the old plaza church and the snow-clad Sleeping Woman, the volcano towering there in the turquoise sky—seeing it through the duplicate frame of a triple arch and their own emotions. The Baron spied me and presented me gravely to his latest find.

Her black eyes surveyed me critically, then softened in a quick, friendly fashion. "Let us three," she suggested, "have a glass of wine out of those little Mexican green glasses—over there at the open-air booth. It is chilly. The air is thin here in Amecameca."

We touched glasses. Then she suggested, "Let us three climb

up to the churches on the Sacramonte." She gestured—a bird-like flutter of her hand—at the little hill behind the flat-roofed town. "From there we can watch the sunset on the volcanoes."

I excused myself, and that was the last I ever saw of Giacconda. It seemed that she was "just a pool of muddled emotions."

December 12, when all of Mexico celebrates Guadalupe day, I went with the Baron and Gretchen out to the little suburb, jammed with Indians and worshipers of every kind. Pilgrims had come from all over the land. Tehuantepec Indians were there in their bright red gold-embroidered blouses and ample lace headdresses. Otomí Indians camped over their cooking braziers in the plaza and side streets, whole families of them. The women's bright striped skirts were wrapped in pleats about their loins. The men were in white "*pyjamas*" and weather-beaten straw hats.

Gretchen enjoyed it all. Of Junoesque lines, she was built like a Greek statue. Her ample white arms were like marble. She had both dignity and warmth. A German girl, I thought, will do him good.

We wandered through the market stalls with their heaps of green and red and black pottery, their dazzling piles of sarapes, their painted-pig savings banks. We went into the blue Mudejar chapel of the Holy Well and climbed up the zigzag stone path to the place where the Virgin is said to have appeared to the awe-stricken Indian Diego four centuries before. From there we could see the whole valley of Mexico, its glistening lakes, the tall towers of Mexico City, the brown fallow fields, the lofty snow-draped volcanoes.

The Baron and Gretchen seemed tender and happy together. Already they adored each other. I was greatly relieved, for a man cannot go through life always with a pain in his heart and a bruised soul.

But at the Frontón the following night, the Baron seemed wholly intent on the rapid-fire *jai alai* game. He tucked a twenty-peso bill into the split tennis ball and tossed it back to the red-capped bookmaker. A few minutes later he walked out of the place two hundred pesos to the good.

"Lucky! Bah! You know the old saying." He crunched a cigarette under heel and hailed a taxi. "You needn't ask me," he blazed out. "You know, the way she would catch up her dress when she started to cross the street, well—Brunhilda used to do that."

He bunched up in a corner of the taxi, his face ashen. "For me to drink," he growled, "would only make things worse. To read—tonight that is impossible. The shows are closed. A cabaret—more damned women! What would you suggest?"

We sat in the corner of a little bar over very long glasses of beer and talked until three in the morning. I learned vividly the tragedy of man who has no roots, no purpose in life, and a sufficient, though small, income.

I fear that I am making the Baron out as a petulant, self-indulgent ass. Nothing is further from the truth. He had character—at least people immediately obeyed him. He had a charm that won the lowest and the highest. He was brilliant and caustic, his mind replete with information. He understood people and life. I never spent a bored moment in his company.

These agreeable qualities made it all the more tragic to see him so utterly adrift, eating his heart out for a useless memory. Or was it all a genteel pose, an excuse for being a vagabond of sorts, a shield against the obligation to make something out of life? Whichever was true—men's deeper motives are difficult to ascertain—one could not doubt that until his obsession for Brunhilda were broken he would remain driftwood on the current of life.

3

Out in a little village on the flank of the Anahuac hills—a place of tilted, stony, flower-smothered lanes between little thatched or adobe houses—I remarked how contented, though poverty-stricken, the Indians seemed as they went about their fields.

“Don’t get sentimental,” he snapped. “That is well enough for them, not for us. We have been touched by the wand of knowledge. We know life’s futility. Ours is an inevitable cosmic despair. We cannot merely live and breed like animals.”

“They are happier.”

“Who wants to be happy. That is a weak or ignorant man’s refuge. I know very well that I am the dead end of a world that has come to a dead end, of a class that has no further usefulness on earth and can only exist in terms of senile greed. It had much better disappear. Once we served a social purpose just being cultured and elegant, guiding the state suavely, going off to battle when it was really necessary. But our day is done. We are just a dead weight in society. Our class is useless. We are useless, save a few who could change. And so I am a prey to my personal dilemma, a man now in the grip of just a memory, a scented beautiful memory more real than reality. Which means, as I told you long ago, I am a lost soul. But for the nostalgia of that romance, what would I be, how would I exist?” Behind the mockery of his words, I saw that he had analyzed himself far better than I could.

It was on my lips to say that since he saw his problem so clearly—but I realized in time this was a superfluous remark.

He called to an Indian at the door of a little hut. We turned in through the gate of a cactus fence.

The Indian patiently waited our approach. He was a study in brown and white, broad brown face, white shirt, and full

white pantaloons. Thong sandals were on his bare feet. He laid down his broad straw sombrero on the stone at the doorway.

"*Buenos días, señores,*" he said with gentle friendliness.

"*Buenos días, caballero.*"

"You are strangers here," he said. "You are welcome."

We chatted. The Baron asked him about his work, his fields, his family. The mysterious Indian—in ten minutes the Baron had made him his friend and slave and had laid bare the mainsprings of the man's existence.

"What would you like to have most in the world if you could?" the Baron asked.

The Indian looked blank. "I need nothing, señor," he said, spreading out his hands in a puzzled fashion.

The Baron went away laughing softly, a bit bitterly. "To want nothing! Happy man!" he muttered. "The curse of the world is wanting something. That which is far away seems good. That which is close at hand is scorned. The Indian back there has learned eternal wisdom. But has he?" The Baron stopped and meditatively pushed a stone off the path. "Has he? Human greed, greed of experience, of knowledge, of wealth, of love, of power—wanting things—ah, that wanting, that eternal wanting of things has made the world turn round. It caused the first monkey to stand on his legs and be a man. Wanting things—that is the difference between a stone and mankind. We would like the peace of not wanting, of not needing to want. But that is death, death for a man and a people."

"Even that Indian wants something, though he spoke to the contrary."

The Baron stopped in his tracks. "You are right. He wants the sunrise and the sunsets, the good rains, the good seed, the swelling bud, the blessings of Saint Anthony, children, the

fiesta, good pulque. He wants things he can reasonably secure. He may even have dreams, but he couldn't tell you so."

"He works toward his dream, however limited, instead of merely watching it glimmer from afar. He has a means of functioning—"

"I know, I know," the Baron interrupted brusquely.

4

He avoided me for three weeks—at least I thought he did. But when I saw him again, he was a different Baron. The sag had gone out of his cheeks, the veiled lusterless quality of his eyes had been replaced by a kindling glance. There was tone in his face and acts. He was alive.

"Who is she?" I demanded.

"At last—the new nail. No doubt this time. The only woman who has ever made me forget Brunhilda. She is a Mexican girl—oh, not like all these we see. Something rare and special."

He dragged me straight to her house.

She was enough to turn any man's head—slender, young, tender, obviously wealthy and of good breeding. She was apparently in part descended from the good Celts who immigrated into Spain before the dawn of history. She had smooth black hair drawn back from a wide forehead and a white, white skin, whiter than any woman's skin I have ever seen, and from her face shone those great blue eyes. She carried herself with stately grace. Her bosom was high, her limbs long and flowing. Physically she matched the Baron well. I soon discovered she had poise, but also spriteliness, and had been educated in Europe.

As soon as I heard her name, Beatriz Baranquilla del Castillo, I knew she came from an old leading family, one now at outs with the newer Mexico of the revolution, which I thought might unfortunately drag the Baron back into his aristocratic

preoccupations and prevent him from getting a grip on the soil of life again.

But there was no doubting the worthiness of his choice. From then on I did not see much of him, except when I ran into him with Beatriz, of course properly chaperoned in good Mexican fashion—her little sister, her mother, her brother. At the time the Russian ballet came to town I saw them in a box at the Arbeu Theatre. She was strikingly beautiful in her black and gold gown. They made a magnificent pair. I also saw them walking among the bright red berries of the coffee plants in the Borda gardens in Cuernavaca. Almost always they had tea in the blue-tiled room at Sanborn's or went to Chapultepec Park and sat on the terrace watching sundown on the old castle and among the huge trees of the garden. They were at the German boat club in Xochimilco for the international regatta. She smiled at me, in that slow, sweet but animated way of hers, from under a white, broad-brimmed, flouncing hat. And I saw them dancing at the old convent, now San Angel Inn, out in the suburbs. Their names appeared in the social columns as guests at nearly every diplomatic reception.

The change in the Baron was even more marked when I met him one noon on Madero Street. He dragged me into Bach's. Yes, he was going to marry her. It would settle everything. He would make his permanent home in Mexico. Oh, of course they would travel, a honeymoon to Germany and that sort of thing. He would take the opportunity to revive business connections, planned to go into the importing business. He saw all sorts of possibilities in Mexico now. He wanted to learn more about its history, its archaeology, its flora, lots of things. He even had his hobbies worked out.

I was greatly relieved. We all expected the engagement to be announced any day.

5

Three weeks later, at eleven at night, my doorbell rang. There stood the Baron, haggard, a fuming volcano of a man. He came in and slumped into a chair.

"I'm done. It's no use. I'm going to blow my brains out—tonight."

This, I saw, was no idle threat. His hand even seemed to creep toward his overcoat pocket. He actually panted when he tried to talk—the first time I had ever seen him without that insouciant, ironical protective mantle of his. All his culture, his intelligence, his brain were utterly useless at this particular moment. He was unbalanced. All his guards were down. He had been sliced back to the core of raw despair. "Yes, I shall blow my brains out," he repeated.

I tried to bridge the shock by facetiousness, which must have jarred him exceedingly. "Spare my carpet, whatever you do. If you must commit the gory deed, at least let us seek a more appropriate and less embarrassing spot. What in hell has happened?"

"I have just left Beatriz at home. We were dancing a waltz at L'Escargot. I never felt closer to any woman than at that moment. We were perfectly attuned to each other in body and spirit. Then suddenly I felt something that was not attuned, some slight quiver of her body, something no one else in the world could have noticed. Human beings in love are super-sensitive. I realized that some other man at that very moment had made some vivid impression on her. It broke the intimate connection between us. Then she flashed a coquettish smile at another person."

"Women are that way," I said drily.

"Yes, and at any other moment I might not have minded. There is little harm in such things. Beatriz is stunningly beau-

tiful. All men are irresistibly attracted by her. Inevitable. Inevitable also that there should be some spark occasionally between her and some other man. There are little corners in every person which someone else besides the loved one can bring to the surface. Such corners should not remain dark and hidden. Her smile was natural, to be expected. At any other moment it would not have affected me. At that moment it was fatal."

His tenseness eased away from him as he talked. I marveled that though so shaken he could analyze things so well. He continued:

"I asked her whom she was smiling at.

"She denied smiling. That infuriated me. 'You are not telling me the truth,' I blazed. Stopping in the middle of the dance, I led her back to our table. Her sister looked at me questioningly.

"Beatriz became suddenly petulant herself. 'Yes, I suppose I was smiling. I had not realized it.'

"'Who is the gentleman?' I saw a tall, handsome-looking bandit, the type every man knows to be a scoundrel but to whom all women are immediately attracted.

"'I never saw him before in my life,' she said, pulling a rose from the centerpiece to bits.

"She had deliberately flirted. I grew sullen. Once more we danced. Again she smiled at him, in part, I suppose, precisely because she had discovered that it tormented me.

"With a cold smile I twisted her arm cruelly. She cried out. I was glad to hurt her. She saw it, and her eyes filled with tears. At that moment I knew that all was forever over between us."

"You are too hasty," I protested. "Such an incident might arise between any two people of opposite sex. One cannot always attune one's body and mind to another person, however beloved. A bit of tiredness or temporary perverseness, anything—"

"I know. I know. I have reasoned that ten thousand times

between her door and here. But that moment, in that very instant, all was done. I led her back to the table, called for her wraps, took her home in silence and left her."

"But tomorrow—"

"Not tomorrow, never—" he cried in an anguished tone. "I tell you it is all over, done, dead, buried except for the pain of it. The worst of it is, I think she is the most remarkable woman I ever met. But when Beatriz smiled at that scoundrel, Brunhilda suddenly looked over her shoulder. Brunhilda held me the exact moment when part of Beatriz abandoned me. Beatriz has had an invisible competitor all the time. I thought Beatriz had won. I wanted her to. But suddenly tonight, I didn't want Beatriz any more. I don't want her now. I won't ever want her. I want only Brunhilda. It is not just a mood. I know myself. If I ever had any real love for Beatriz, it died. A smile killed it. A little, careless smile."

6

He dragged me out into the streets. I dared not leave him to his own devices. In a fever he dashed here, there, everywhere, to this and that center of diversion, high and low. "If you leave me, I'd surely end it all tonight," he threatened.

Mostly we hit low dives. He seemed to get a sort of masochistic delight out of them. We went to a suburban dance hall, known to the police as the "Bucket of Blood" because of the frequent killings there. It was a barn-like place with bright colored paper festoons, a Cuban orchestra, and benches around the side crowded with frowsy-looking girls and shabby men of the Indian or half-breed classes. A policeman frisked us at the door for guns, and inside the men danced with their hats on. I achieved considerable pleasure in seeing the fastidious Baron in such a plebeian setting. We went to a vividly painted dance hall in the tough Peravillo ward, also famed for its underworld violences. It had an orchestra high up in a little loft with a wooden

railing, and gay, leather, upholstered side-booths, known in Mexico as "Pullmans."

In the course of our peregrinations, we picked up a vagabond violinist whom the Baron added to our entourage with promises of great lucre. Under our praise and the many drinks we poured down his throat—he was the thirstiest man I have ever known—his genius unfolded like a pond lily in early spring. He grew inspired. He sawed furiously at his battered instrument. He sang sobbingly to all the world. He did not stop between places. He was going to earn his keep—there was not the slightest doubt of that.

Nowhere did we suffer any mishap. In the places where according to story books we should have had our throats promptly cut, we were received with open arms. Everyone was gallant and generous. Everyone was profoundly touched by our solicitude for the ratty-looking violinist in his greenish coat, with its puffing elbows. No one was at all deceived by the Baron's grand manners, his flourishing presentation of our great maestro, whom he assured everyone was a worthy competitor of Kreisler and a long list of other famous violinists, but the depraved folk in those dives heartily cheered our perspiring musician, who twisted his pointed mustachios, rolled up his shining eyes, and wrung the blood out of his heart to prove himself worthy of our attentions.

I cannot remember that the Baron danced with any of the hostesses. One perky, gay little thing in a yellow dress, a flaring glass-sparkling comb and long bobbing earrings, perched on the side of our Pullman and then retreated, perplexed by the Baron's barrage of banter, perplexed and slightly sullen, not quite sure whether she had been insulted or not.

Nor did we outstay our welcome anywhere. The Baron flitted from cabaret to cabaret with the intense purposefulness with which he flitted from country to country—trying to for-

get the marvelous Brunhilda, and now also his new disappointment.

We ended up in the cold miserable dawn in the little plaza in front of the San Juan flower market. The three of us stretched out on the dewy grass, weary beyond words. The violinist, using his case for a pillow, dropped off at once into a loudly sonorous sleep. Dazedly we watched the Indian women, their blue shawls tight about their brown faces, bobbing about their business in the wan half-light. A goodly part of the night they had probably been trotting into town with their big loads of carnations and lilies and violets, but now they looked fresh and busy. They splattered water around with gusto to wash off their stalls and the sidewalks, and it filled the thin upland air with penetrating damp. Despite the matter-of-factness of those women, their world seemed wholly unreal, and the fresh fragrance of the flowers merely made a vague symphony of perfume from a realm of unbelievable fantasy.

But the Baron suddenly became as fresh and alive as the Indian women. All his old control over himself seemed regained. He watched the market bustle with concentrated interest. "Look at those marvelous wreaths!" he exclaimed, pointing at the big floral funeral wheels, some eight feet across—purple and white flowers twined with black crepe.

"I have it," he suddenly shouted. "An old Mexican custom. We must serenade the lady and take her a proper floral offering. A serenade. Have you ever been awakened out of profound slumber by sweet music? It is an ethereal sensation. Heaven cannot surpass it. The dulcet strains creep into your consciousness like a delicate perfume, like the slow flush of wine. Such music is like the caress of the hand of a lover. One smiles in one's sleep. One stirs almost imperceptibly. One breathes deeply as though to inhale the sensation. One is drawn into day by fairy threads, a prisoner of pleasure and happiness.

Do you remember how Wagner in exile and in poverty woke his wife on her birthday with music specially composed? Come. This is the witching hour."

He shook the violinist awake. The latter groaned and shivered. His face was gray and shrunken. With his protruding teeth and funny mustache, he looked like a little muskrat. "Can you play *mañanitas*, morning serenades?" demanded the Baron.

The violinist, plainly intoxicated, affected to be insulted by such a question. "*Mañanitas* are my specialty." Then he groaned again.

The Baron strode over to a market-stall and after dickering with the Indian woman, purchased a gigantic purple wreath, the largest in stock. We hailed a cab. The wreath was so big it had to be tied on top of the hood. With some effort we dumped the groggy violinist inside.

He slept again almost immediately as we joggled over the cobblestones on a short-cut street to the Colonia del Valle residential section. We drew up before Beatriz' house.

Untying the wreath, we propped it against the front door.

The violinist responded only partially to our shaking, but at last we managed to support him on either side—he was quite unable to stand alone—while he played and sang a *mañanita*. Despite his condition he did fairly well. It was a sweet song.

He played and played. The light brightened to silver haze on the two snow-clad volcanoes behind which the sun was still hidden. Vapor was curling up from the gardens about. A milk-driver stopped his cart for a few minutes to watch us, then flicked his whip over his horse with a perplexed shake of his head.

Presently Beatriz opened one of the long upstairs balcony windows and leaned out in a silk dressing gown. She smiled and waved, then disappeared again. Her face was radiant. She ap-

parently felt that the misunderstanding of the night before had been properly erased.

The Baron rang the front doorbell and hurried back. We loaded our tipsy violinist into the car.

The Baron waited until the front door opened, knocking down the wreath. Then he ordered the car to speed away.

"Our love is dead. I have placed the proper wreath on the affair as a gentleman should do."

Thoughtfully he took out his monogrammed case and lit his last cigarette, then handed the case to me. "I should like you to keep this case with my family crest on it—always—as a memento of tonight and of me," he said gravely.

I looked at him alarmed. "You aren't going to do something foolish!" I began.

He laughed. "My good friend, I died long ago. Suicide would be a foolish, superfluous gesture. Have you ever heard of Geisha girls in Japan?" he asked. "I think I shall be leaving Mexico soon—very soon."

MY OWN, MY NATIVE LAND

IN AUGUST, 1924, I WENT TO New York by boat, an experience fraught with deep emotions, for I had been out of my country over six years.

It was high time I was getting back. My English, even, had been influenced by my speaking mostly Spanish and Italian. Several Americans, met by chance abroad, had asked me in a puzzled tone: "Are you from New England or are you English?" Later in New York, Lewis Gannett, then on the *Nation* staff, asked me a similar question. And a young lady with an analytical ear, though she herself had been an East Side immigrant, even pointed out several fine shades of sound which I made differently from an American.

I had found great spiritual wealth abroad. But now I needed the fresh perspective of my own country.

In Mexico I had learned to make my living. I had reached there in abject poverty, knowing no one, not even the language, and had made an unusually successful niche for myself in almost Horatio Alger fashion. Now I was returning to New York, after my wandering years in Europe, again virtually penniless. For most of my energy had been spent trying to get ahead with my writing, and though I had had numerous magazine articles published and two books, the net results did not mean a very large remuneration. That I could easily get along in Mexico I had proved to myself. That I could do the same in New York after such an interval, I was not at all sure. I was far from feeling assured of the future that year as my thirtieth

birthday approached. So far as economic security went, I felt almost as though I were for the first time venturing into a foreign land.

New York was not unknown to me. I had come there eight years previous, this same month, to do my graduate work at Columbia University where I had a scholarship.

It had been a busy year, and fresh from provincial California, a great awakening. I took my Master's degree, with a thesis on the self-sufficient state and simultaneously completed the work required in Teachers College for a certificate. To pay my way, I had worked at an apartment house switchboard at night, had tutored, taught algebra at a Y.M.H.A., sold shoes at a Fifth Avenue store on Saturdays, played chess for two dollars an hour with a retired Wall Street banker. In addition to writing my Master's thesis, I had done a book which had required endless research and with which I had dreamed of winning the Hart, Schaffner and Marx economics prize. When it did not, I cheerfully tossed the manuscript into the fire.

Now, eight years later, I was coming back, and on a Friday night late, the lights of Atlantic City and the boardwalks shone across the sea—a golden chain stretched for endless miles. I gazed upon it eagerly and stayed up most of the night in the hope of seeing the New York skyline again. The net result was to behold a dense fog.

In the morning I piled off the frowsy Brooklyn dock, depressed and groggy from lack of sleep, wishing I was back in the sunlight of Vera Cruz.

2

New York is more Main Street than Main Street. Or better said, it is a series of Main Streets, created in the image of prejudices. It is made up of a thousand Zeniths that have never heard

of each other. In New York, you pick your own Main Street and set up your own cardboard trappings.

On a real Main Street, a person jostles with others having prejudices different from his own. In New York he picks out a bevy of addicts of his own pet prejudice, and does not have to worry about the others. You become part of a circle of folk all more or less having the same outlook, thinking the same thoughts and feeling the same emotions as yourself. These different circles rarely impinge. They are insulated against the rest of the world. If one stays in a certain circle of people in New York long enough, one can easily become more provincial than the person from the Styx, with a more warped idea of the world than he can get almost anywhere else.

Aside from its commercialism and its amusement life, New York has no defined physiognomy. It is all things to all men. It is so tolerant that it fosters individual intolerance. Nearly everybody in New York is a little fish in a big pond, but a big fish in his very, very little pond. People find their little pond and that is their salvation.

This is the road to quick literary success in New York. Pick out your clique, stick to it, do a lot of back-scratching of your fellow members. It would save a great deal of confusion for ordinary readers if someone would provide a manual of New York literary cliques, which usually revolve around some fad or dogma, magazine or newspaper, so that one could say: Mr. X conforms to the party line; you will know therefore whether he writes on Proust, the TVA, Charlie Chaplin, or hog-calling, what his interpretation will add up to. Mr. Y has become a Trotskyite, so that you know he will be more radical than the radicals, but against the Soviet Union and with a degree of respectability. Mr. Z is a member of this particular Liberal group, and therefore you know that whether he writes on the Ku Klux Klan, the Spanish revolution, or hay fever, just what he is going

to say on peace, civil liberties, and the Mooney case. Mr. A belongs to the smart aleck set; you know that he will be witty, cynical and shallow. Mr. B belongs to the sacred family complex; you know, before he starts to write, that he will parade his piety, mention his children, damn labor and speak awesomely of all powerful persons. Most New York intellectuals are merely walking placards.

My own feeling is that writers, unless they have a definite job in New York, can do best by keeping away from the big city as much as possible, avoid its back-biting cliques, literary log-rolling and world-saving committees, and tend to one's knitting. But I had to get to know New York well, to live its life, and feel at home there before I came to this conclusion.

This did not occur on this particular visit. I met many magazine editors, publishers, literary lights and other folk. I also got myself into a very unfortunate entanglement. Mostly I felt maladjusted, frustrated, unable to work well. I was too poor to take advantage of the manifest benefits New York offers or to make many needful contacts. I had come up to make a niche for myself. I didn't make it, and just then had no particular desire to go through the ordeals required. If I did, I wanted to do so my own way by conserving my own independence, otherwise the price was too high. Soon my deepest desire was to get away again.

3

Toward the end of 1924, Plutarco Elías Calles came through on his way back from Europe to be inaugurated as President. I went down to see him at the Waldorf Astoria.

Calles was to deliver two speeches in New York, one at a dinner arranged by the large steel and financial interests of the country, the other at the Washington Irving High School to the *hoi polloi*.

Ambassador Tellez, whom I ran into at the Waldorf, asked

me to help him translate the talk for the hotel dinner, and we worked well into the night at his apartment to put it into precise English, of which he himself had a remarkable grasp.

Tellez was one of the most brilliant and likable diplomats who ever came out of Mexico and for some years was dean of the diplomatic corps in Washington. Later he became Secretary of State in Mexico but was not the man to enjoy Mexican political intrigue and presently was cast aside to die recently, poverty-stricken, nearly blind. Tellez came at a time when Mexico was in great disfavor at Washington and the Mexican Embassy had no social status. By his tact and patience he converted it into one of the centers of Washington life and made himself one of the best-liked diplomats around the lot. Without Tellez' preliminary work in the realm of good relations, it is doubtful whether Ambassador Dwight W. Morrow would have later found such easy sailing. Morrow's later work rests squarely on the foundations laid by Tellez, though it is doubtful if Tellez was ever fully in accord with Morrow's aims.

As a result of my visit to the Waldorf, I was run in as one of the speakers at the Washington Irving meeting, the others being Norman Thomas, Morris Hillquit and a prominent Washington labor man. And so the night following the preparation of the English version of Calles' speech at the banquet, I attended a small dinner in his honor before we went to the high school.

Calles had not only become more forceful, but had acquired much polish since my earlier encounters with him. Once or twice, though, I was distinctly repelled by affected poses. Various times he held up his forefinger and kept it thus after he had finished speaking while he looked around the table with an important glare to note the effect of what he had said on the rest of us.

We reached Washington Irving High School after an auto-

mobile parade through the East Side, blossoming brightly with Mexican flags and artificial flares, for there Hillquit had his cohorts.

The auditorium was packed with an enthusiastic audience. I had been warned not to say anything that would at all embarrass the future President of Mexico; everything had to be very discreet and proper.

Hillquit and Thomas, naturally, presented Calles as a great apostle of Socialism; but when in my talk I mentioned something about American petroleum companies, nothing very outspoken, Thomas, acting as chairman, nervously jumped up to whisper in my ear that my time was up.

Calles closed his speech—which was translated phrase by phrase as he went along by the Mexican Consul General, Alberto Mascareñas—with the flaming words: “Before I will betray the proletariat, I will wrap myself in the red flag and hurl myself into the abyss.” Thunderous applause greeted these brave words.

Since then, of course, he has betrayed his dear proletariat over and over again, and incidentally even before then had made himself a multimillionaire by his advocacy of revolutionary principles. As a result of that betrayal, eventually he was exiled to the United States.

At the time of his speech at the high school, I could not help contrasting his words with those I had translated for the Waldorf banquet to take place the next night, in which he disclaimed any intention of heading a radical government, iterated his friendliness to American capital and invited it to Mexico. He was pulling somebody’s leg. As a matter of fact, he was pulling the legs of both groups for his own purposes. In short he was a politician.

This was the first time I had ever met Hillquit or Thomas. Hillquit was a polished go-getter, with a razor-blade mind, keen,

ironic, ruthlessly clear and brilliant, always shrewd, an outstanding example of a certain type of intellectual Jewish lawyer, endowed with innumerable facile talents, power of clever expression, astuteness, vigor and mobility far surpassing most of the human race, a type particularly hated by dull-witted gentiles. In his speech that night, Hillquit had perfect poise, precise diction, cutting phrasing. He knew all the tricks of winning the favor of the audience and received a tremendous ovation.

Beside him, Thomas, if a more direct soul, seemed a very weak sister. Though a very good speaker, he still bore the noticeable earmarks of the preaching profession he had abandoned. More on the eloquent pulpit order, he was still involved in a lot of sentimental haziness and lofty prophecy. He was the romantic apostle as opposed to Hillquit, who thought in terms of *Realpolitik*.

4

The episode of Calles turned my thoughts more frequently to Mexico. I was anxious either to return there or visit some other Latin American country, to widen my knowledge of the lands to the south. But as spring slid into summer, because of working almost exclusively on a book manuscript, *Brimstone and Chili*, I went stone broke.

A friend was generous enough to let me use her basement apartment on west Twelfth Street beyond the "L" while she went out to her houseboat. Unfortunately she was in the business of buying and remodeling apartments, and my time was half used up answering phone calls from carpenters, painters, masons, insurance men, real estate owners and others. And it was a sweltering place.

As summer advanced, I managed to get out for a visit to my friends of Mexican days, Maurice Becker and his wife Dorothy Baldwin and her sister Margaret, in Tioga, Pennsylvania. They were a life-saver to me, and I owe them a debt of gratitude.

There I finished up *Brimstone and Chili*, worked in the garden, sawed wood, walked to near-by towns, and went swimming in the shallow little creek.

Tioga is a quaint town which, off the main railroad and highways, has gradually decayed. Margaret, under a pseudonym, had just published an unusually capable novel, *Nightshade*, with a thinly disguised Lesbian theme, which dealt with curious local types. In spite of its anonymity, the news of the author and the setting had gotten around Tioga. As a result an old lady, whom Marg had quartered in the novel, used to stand out on the sidewalk every morning when Marg went down to her office, wave her cane at her furiously and shout in filthy language that she would kill her. On the walls of the town appeared big chalk signs: "The Perkins kids are frog-faced. A book says so."

Marg was a real character. She had an office in a downtown brick building where she served as notary public, dabbled in real estate and drew up legal documents for the farmers about. She was really the town adviser, its father-confessor. People came to her from far and wide with their troubles. She was the confidante of everyone from the town's fancy ladies to the well-to-do. People who asked her advice always paid her a fee.

One day a meek little villager, recently divorced from his shrewish wife, appeared at Marg's door, scraping his feet and twisting his hat. Not content to let well enough alone after a costly divorce, through a matrimonial agency he had promptly married another woman, sight unseen. She appeared, a veritable Amazon, with her daughter (not mentioned in the prospectus) and promptly took charge of the poor fellow's every act. Frequently she took after him with a butcher-knife. Every week she made him fork over every cent of his wages. Once he used part to pay his lodge dues, and she so threatened his life he fled from the house for good.

Now, afraid to go near but fearing his chickens and rabbits

would die, he had come to ask Marg what to do. She told him to go with a witness, take his pets away and not return. He paid her three dollars and thanked her profusely.

Marg's conscience hurt her. She hated to take his much needed money, but he would have been unhappy if he had not paid her, would have felt that her advice was not to be relied upon.

Marg was a very good sport, except when it came to cigars, men with bulldogs and other types of male exhibitionism. She hated these things, but on the floor above her office in the vestibule of Maurice's studio, she had a pool table and was an excellent player. When Maurice was painting my portrait, the three of us would often spend many hours there at the game.

One afternoon, one of the village characters came around with a demijohn of dandelion wine. Marg bought it. We all got into conversation in the kitchen, Marg perched on the kitchen stove, to argue about life in general, and kept on until four in the morning. Marg had a caustic insight into people and events, salted with clever turn of phrase, and loved human foibles. It was a joy to listen to her tales of the strange doings of the folk in the run-down village of Tioga.

Maurice and Dode (Dorothy) were equally fine folk. Maurice himself was kindness and fervor personified. He was then painting mostly his Mexican memories from sketch notes, earthy things with an overriding note of shrill blue.

5

About the time I finished *Brimstone and Chili*, I received an offer to accompany a commercial mission to Latin America as interpreter, contact man and publicist. Several checks from articles came in, so I was able to go down to New York to see about it. The opportunity was excellent to get away from New York, though not in the rôle I should have liked.

To get over the rest of the summer, I decided to go off where

living would be cheap. When a boy, I had collected stamps and often examined the map. Once I had put my finger on several places I would someday visit. Three, I remember, were Ethiopia, Afghanistan and Prince Edward Island, Canada.

During the recent trouble, I was offered an assignment to go to Ethiopia but could not take it; but in that year 1925, at any rate, even if the pockets were well-nigh empty, I could get to Prince Edward Island and, with a companion, I hitch-hiked.

By jerking our thumbs, little by little we progressed from New York to Boston, up through Massachusetts and Maine, finally to Saint John, Canada. From there we hitch-hiked through New Brunswick well up toward the Gulf of St. Lawrence. So few cars traversed the roads there, we paid our fares the rest of the way north.

It was a beautiful ride, across the Gulf by ferry to the island. The finest sunsets in the world are seen in that part of Canada, blazing spectacular affairs, as though the universe itself was on fire, a flame sweeping over water and woods and clouds.

We finally located in an English farmhouse near the little French fishing village of North Rustico. Although most of the region suffers from pea-soup fogs all summer the north coast of the island is largely free from them. I had what amounted to a private beach and used to rise before dawn and go out to swim in the nude. It was a fine sight to watch the sun come up behind the sails of the fishing fleet that every morning went stamping out to sea at about three o'clock. As the water was very cold on the best of days, after a quick swim I would race up and down the sands, just as nature made me, to get warm. One night, swimming in the moonlight, the breakers were so high, I stayed in much longer than usual, diving through them, and as a result became so chilled through I almost passed out. I collapsed without strength to get my wet bathing suit off, and

if it had not been for the strenuous rubbing given me by my companion, the results might have been serious.

I tried a little fishing but without much success; the fishes seem to scorn those not enamored of the sport or who have no presidential aspirations. I took long walks in the woods. Here and there were little green glades entirely secluded, excellent places to take sun-baths and read. It was fun, too, strolling down through the quaint sandy town, its houses on stilts over the tide flats.

I made particular friends with the French family in the light-house. The old lady there, over seventy, still got up at three in the morning to help prepare breakfast for the menfolk. She still helped dress fish and salt them down in the barrels. They were all simple, hardy folk, hospitable and generous in their poverty. Often I went the rounds with one of the boys, up to the tall tower to light the big lamp or to polish the reflectors which he kept like gleaming silver, or out across the sea to the two little islands to tend to the channel lights. I could imagine his task when the ice came and the great drifts of snow settled down, or when the sea was storm-lashed in late autumn.

A French woman, housekeeper for a number of the fisher-boys, did my laundry. Never since Paris have I seen washing done up so beautifully, with the same little red identification threads—a real work of art—evidently a French talent long before the settlement of the New World. In other ways she was remarkable. She looked after her four boys as though she were their real mother. She scolded at them to save their money, had heart-pangs when they went off on spree, cured their ailments and gave them hearty, well-cooked food.

She was bitter against the English, and told me in detail the whole horrible story of the Acadian deportations. This ancient wrong, heightened in the present by the piggish attitude of the English farmers about, rich and arrogant squires, who would

not even sell milk or vegetables to the French folk, rankled in the hearts of these simple French folk as though it had all happened yesterday. They still had no use for the English—a venom which reminds us that injustices committed by nations against other peoples smolder long and are rarely forgotten. It will take centuries before our marine atrocities in Nicaragua and elsewhere in the Caribbean are forgotten by the folk there.

My health grew excellent. I revised *Brimstone and Chili*, wrote articles, stories and considerable poetry. I came to love the life, the swimming, the walks through the forests or along the bluffs of the sea, the contacts with the folk, watching fishermen mend their nets, watching the farmers gather dripping, smelly kelp from the sea to stack against the house walls clear to the eaves, before the winter snows would bury them clear to the roof-tops. Autumn, though, was rolling around. The twilights were getting a sharp nip in them. The brush smoke had a peculiar haze. It was time to be getting back to New York.

Two days before I arrived there, the two heads of the commercial mission I expected to accompany to South America were drowned while canoeing in upstate New York.

DON'T TELL YOUR WIFE

THE TRAIN HAD REACHED THE international bridge at Laredo, Texas. It stopped short, started, stopped again, a series of hesitations as though it were doubtful about plunging into a new land. The sands below the piers glowed with sunlight; it seeped into the eyes with a red tinge. Toward the Mexican side, nude brown boys were bathing in the now shallow stream.

The American town, with its neat business cubes, tall buildings, precisely carved streets, was like a phantom city from nowhere. In lower Texas, one passed interminable stretches of sand and sagebrush and scraggly hills, then suddenly 100 per cent Americanism loomed out of barrenness.

But, except in outward appearance, in population and considerably so in spirit, Laredo is more Mexican than American. Much of the leisurely ease of the southern country pervades its life, bands in the plaza, evening promenades, the faint yammer of guitars.

But Nuevo Laredo, on the other side of the border, really belongs there in the desert, a flat-roofed adobe town drowsing in dust and cottonwood trees, like the faded chrome print of a tawny sleeping animal. Actually the money-changers take their pound of flesh, the curio shops grab at the heels of tourists, shops tumbled with the shoddiest of all the handicrafts; saloons and dives thrive on Texas drawl—this is the hybrid quality Americans have given to Nuevo Laredo.

Although my original plans to go to South America had been

frustrated, I had made a news connection and had made arrangements for magazine stuff from Mexico. From the very first minute, to be again in Mexico, though the real savor of the country appears only below the great northern desert region, seemed to me like getting home once more. The dry dusty plains unrolled before the moving car-windows; peasant folk in familiar rustic rôles; the lone horseman plodding under the sun across a sand ridge, face hidden by his big sombrero; burros jogging along with loads of alfalfa that curtained them to their very hoofs, or with corn sheaves stacked up like a thatched house; Indian women selling chicken in brick-dust-colored stews.

In our Pullman was a wealthy Jewish hotel man and his wife from Florida, on his way to look over the hotel field in Tampico. When we rolled through lower Texas, his eyes bulged as he saw the Mexicans in big sombreros and bright shirts and sashes, lounging on station platforms.

"It's just like the picture-postcards, ain't it!" he exclaimed.

At Nuevo Laredo we strolled up and down the platform; his eyes bulged still wider, for here the Mexicans wore cartridge belts with big guns in holsters.

"And do they really use them?" he inquired, awed.

Another companion and I could not resist spoofing him. Though most of Mexico had become quite safe as compared to revolutionary days, we told him a number of hair-raising yarns, how every week the Tampico train was held up by bandits, often all the passengers were killed.

For five long minutes he walked the platform in tense silence, then with a deep sigh, said: "Vell, I guess I von't tell my vife."

2

On an impulse I broke my trip at San Luis Potosí to see a very quixotic governor of whom I had heard a great deal—Aurelio Manrique.

At the governor's palace, shabby after so many years of revolution, Manrique received visitors in person, no secretary or intermediary. Much as a country doctor, he would stick his head through the door and inquire, "Who's next?" His boast was that no one who wished to see him was ever turned away.

Presently he nodded to me to come in. He was a big man with a flowing patriarchal beard and a huge white forehead.

Strange anecdotes were told about him. He had passed a prohibition law, very unpopular among the big maguey growers who produced *mescal*. He could find no one to enforce it properly, so on occasion, he would strap his gun on and ride his white horse right through the swinging doors, order the place closed and padlock it—a sort of Carrie Nation.

On another occasion, in the middle of the night, it suddenly occurred to him that before he had come in as governor, many innocent men had been jailed. All prisons were an abomination which augmented rather than decreased crime. On the instant, he hurried down and threw open the gates of the penitentiary.

"Go forth, my sons," he declared magniloquently.

But it was dead winter and freezing outside. Many of the inmates, having no money and no place to go, complained bitterly at being ousted.

But despite a few such special hobbies, Manrique was an excellent administrator, careful and honest. His first act as governor of a bankrupt state had been to have the legislature cut his own salary from forty-five to fifteen pesos a day, little more than a modest living wage. He watched over his flock in the state like a hen with chicks and was beloved by the peasants and common folk whom he befriended in every possible way. Calles himself once remarked to a friend of mine: "I have only two honest governors in the whole country." Manrique was one of them.

As proof of Manrique's utter honesty, so rare among Mexi-

can or any other politicians, when eventually he was ousted from the governorship he had to pawn his watch to get to Mexico City. For many months there, he lived in a dark cubby-hole of a room, scarcely large enough to house his numerous cherished books.

Though he had never been out of Mexico, he spoke fluently English, German, French, Italian and half a dozen other languages. He was surpassed as a linguist only by my friend Pablo Casanova, a leading ethnologist, for the latter could speak all the languages Manrique could, and in addition, Polish, Russian, various Slavic and Scandinavian dialects, had a reading knowledge of Hebrew, Latin and Greek, and also spoke four of the native Indian languages, particularly Otomí and Maya.

But Manrique also spoke Esperanto and, I discovered later, still another tongue; for subsequently, in forced exile, in California, he earned his living in the movies in parts where an authentic big black beard was requisite and by teaching Greek. I was not greatly surprised that Manrique knew Greek; I was merely surprised that anybody in the city of Clark Gable and Harry Chandler would want to learn it.

Sometime after I visited Manrique—and he received me with generosity, remembered me and looked me up later in Mexico City—he came to an open break with General Saturnino Cedillo, the military commandant of the state. Cedillo, a fat, swarthy and treacherous Indian, once a well-to-do rancher, had thrown his lot in with the revolution and had risen rapidly to power. But by the time I passed through, he had turned over to the cause of the large landowners. As Manrique had remained staunchly on the side of the peasants, conflict was inevitable. The state became too small for both of them. President Calles thereupon chose, not the honest but the less principled man, because the latter had more immediate military following. This

unfair double-crossing aroused my further suspicions of Calles' honesty of purpose.

The ironical aftermath was that during 1935 and 1936—the users of the sword shall perish by the sword—Cedillo in turn helped Cárdenas destroy Calles' power in Mexico. Manrique, now grown conservative, is back in politics, whereas Calles festers in exile. And Cárdenas now has the thorny problem of crushing Cedillo, grown more powerful.

Sometime after Manrique's downfall, the teachers of San Luis Potosí went on strike for a year's back unpaid salary. Cedillo, then in full power in the state, at once denounced them as Communists, flung them into jail, put them to work under armed guard on his vast private haciendas—which as a revolutionary he was not supposed to own—and killed a few of them. I got an explanatory wire off to Roger Baldwin, of the International Committee for Political Prisoners. Immediately he pointed up a strong protest, signed by influential Americans, which was rushed down to the Mexican Embassy and was published in the press.

Within three days the schoolteachers were all released, and Cedillo hastened to make a settlement with them.

3

After New York, Mexico City, with its balmy bright light and sunny days, its leisurely ways, was soothing and also stimulating.

Old friends were there. Howard Phillips was running *Mexican Life*, and it was always pleasant to drop into his office on Uruguay 3, its walls completely covered by paintings and drawings by leading Mexican and American artists, as well as quite a few by himself.

Frances Toor had taken a place in a tiled, red-brick "skyscraper" apartment house on Abraham González and was busy

publishing *Mexican Folkways*. She now had an appointment in the Department of Education to investigate Mexican anthropology.

Jean Charlot was still doing charming Mexican themes, with a quaint Gallic touch—this was before he went obscurantist—and still used his mordant, witty tongue. He was helping Anita Brenner compile her *Idols Behind Altars*. Presently he was hired by the Carnegie Foundation to make drawings of stone carvings in Chichen Itzá in Yucatán.

Diego Rivera was still toiling on his notable frescos in the Secretariat of Education. He was living in a big apartment in the older quarters of the city beyond the National Palace, a place very simply decorated and furnished, mostly with native handicrafts. I went there occasionally, once with a good Cuban friend, José Antonio Fernández de Castro (feature writer for the *Diario de la Marina* of Havana), staying with me at the same *pensión* on Avenida Bucareli; another time with Carolina Durieux, a very remarkable artist; still another time with the New York stage decorator, Max Gorelik, and his sister.

I never got along well with Diego's then wife, Lupe Rivera, a wild creature who sought to outmatch Diego's genius in the only way she knew how, by being sarcastic, unruly and whimsical—trying always to be "original." On the afternoon of my visit with Gorelik and his sister, Diego asked us to stay for supper; they were having a party. As we sat down, Lupe muttered darkly about the impudence of uninvited guests. Fortunately Gorelik and his sister spoke no Spanish.

Saying I had to make an urgent phone call, I left the house and did not return.

Later Diego bought a house in the fashionable Colonia Roma. I was there for lunch one day when his three year old child, Pico, was taken ill. Lupe rushed him to the doctor.

The doctor looked him over and said, "He's only drunk."

Pico, after we had gone into the *sala*, had climbed up on the table and emptied all the dregs of the wine glasses down his throat.

Pico's birth was quite an event. Before it was known he was on the way, Lupe went around complaining of being sick. In front of friends, she and Diego argued hotly about her strange malady. Lupe had one theory as to what was ailing her, Diego another. They would almost come to blows over it. To neither did it occur the simplest way was to see a doctor.

When it became apparent that a child was on the way, Diego became furious. He threatened to pack Lupe off to her family in Guadalajara. He shouted that as an artist, he had no need or use for children. They would merely clutter up the studio. The controversy raged for some time. All Diego's friends were brought into the battle.

Months later, one day I saw Lupe and Diego arm in arm on San Juan de Letrán near the National Theatre. Diego, usually daubed with paint from head to foot, was so spruced up he looked indecent.

"Whither bound?" I asked.

In a tender tone, Diego said, "We're out looking for a motor for Lupe's sewing machine. She oughtn't to be doing anything these days to overtax her energies."

Edward Weston and his assistant, Tina Modotti, had interesting reunions at his studio, mostly artists and writers. Tina at that time was an unusually beautiful Venetian girl, with exquisite artistic sensitivity. Later she was deeply involved at the time of the assassination of the Cuban student Julio Antonio Mella, and eventually buried herself in Russia, working for the *Fromintern*. But at this time she was interested only in her art and was doing fine work. At Lee Simonson's request, I published a critique of it in *Creative Arts*.

Weston was a picturesque figure with his big stick, rough

corduroy clothes and scarlet-lined Spanish peasant cape. He was already on the way to becoming one of America's leading photographers.

I went with him, Tina, and her sister Mercedes, a strikingly beautiful and romantic girl, on a brief visit to Cuernavaca. We stayed at the home of Fred Davis, the place later sold to Ambassador Morrow, an enchanting spot with its tall mirador, wide gardens and gigantic white palm trunks, of which Weston made some beautiful moonlit studies.

Among others with whom I became acquainted were Moisés Saenz, doing excellent work as Under-Secretary of Education; Roberto Montenegro, the painter; Heliodoro Valle, a Honduran newspaper man who later went to Washington on the boundary commission, now in Geneva; Enrique Jiménez D., the secretary of Puig Casauranc; Salvador Novo, writer and poet; Best Magaud, painter and author of a method of drawing; Dr. Atl, the painter who loves Indians and volcanoes; Enrique Mungía, brilliant young lawyer for the claims commission, now in Geneva; Angel Salas, now dead, a Spanish painter who decorated some of the public buildings; his wife Mona Sala, a Dominican girl of unusual wit and a competent librarian; Luis Ariquistáin, a very self-important Spanish writer; Mary Doherty, doing publicity work for Luis Morones; Guty Cárdenas, the song writer, later assassinated in Bach's café; Carlos Chávez, Mexico's leading musician; Mariano Azuela, Mexico's leading novelist; Felix Palavicini, the versatile editor of *El Universal*, with a checkered revolutionary and commercial career; Isidro Fabela, Minister of Foreign Affairs under Carranza and a writer.

Azuela, a charming, elderly gentleman, is a physician who lives in the quiet tree-shaded *barrio* of Santa María and is an eminent authority on stomach and intestinal diseases. His novels cover a wide range of Mexican society and all-told give a re-

markable picture of the decay of the Porfirio Díaz epoch and the dilemma of the various classes during the revolutionary period. When I asked him his philosophy about novel writing, he replied simply: "I just try to write stories to entertain people."

Guty Cárdenas once brought Delia Magaña, the comedian, to a dinner party at Mary Wenger's, a rich honey-blond Alabaman girl, where Howard Phillips and I were present. She had been much attracted to an American movie actor then in Mexico—let us call him Douglas. The night he left for the States, she had to perform at the Lirico Theater and could not see him off. But she had a car waiting with two policemen on the running-board, and after her act went hurtling out to Tacubaya past all traffic lights, the two policemen whistling lustily all the way. She got there just in time to rush into the Pullman and throw her arms around Douglas.

Delia did not speak much English, but she managed to describe her emotions. "Oh, I meet many, many mens, so many mens. I luff many mens. But Douglas—zum!" And she made the motion of a knife entering her heart.

Through Douglas she made contacts in Hollywood and got several contracts, but never made any great success. Her talents were too specialized, her comedy too definitely Mexican to appeal to American audiences.

"Q.K." I took out to lunch once; she had grown quite fat. Maya was married.

Shortly after getting back to Mexico, I met Aurea, a red-headed Mexican girl, half German, a descendant of one of Mexico's most famous earlier poets and a relative of the German who had helped me out in Durango on my first difficult trip to the country. She was so lively and graceful and full of laughter that her friends nicknamed her "Señorita Castanets." For seven years, she became, except for occasional aberrations on my part,

my most intimate *compañera* when I was in Mexico, and to her I owe a great deal of my knowledge of Spanish- and Latin-American literature, which we read aloud together.

4

John Dos Passos spent considerable time in Mexico. I had first met him in a gathering of New York literati which had met to discuss the founding of a new magazine to provide a medium for the articles, stories, and drawings of artists too independent to find hospitable reception in established reviews. Among those I particularly remember as attending were my old friend Maurice Becker, Wanda Gag, the pretty little Polish artist with a penchant for etching fireplaces, Waldo Frank, Mike Gold, Hugo Gellert, Helen Black, Joe Freeman and others.

Waldo Frank was suggested as editor but could not afford to take the post. As a matter of fact, the group was being used by the Communist ramrods. Mike Gold railroaded the meeting and got himself named as editor. The result was the *New Masses*, which was promptly converted into an official organ of the Communist Party. My name was used at the masthead along with all the others present, but though I think the *New Masses* has a definite and valuable rôle and has published some fine material and literature, I wrote asking my name be taken off.

John Dos Passos spoke only once at the gathering, in the miopic jerky way he had, stating he would welcome an independent magazine because he found great difficulty in getting his stuff printed. This was startling, for he had an established reputation, had written the best seller, *Three Soldiers*, and numerous other books, that stamped him as potentially the best novelist in America.

Dos rarely recognized friends on the street, being too short-sighted. In social gatherings he is not always sure until he peers and listens to the voice whether he knows someone or not. He

speaks in staccato jerky sentences and with eager enthusiasm, interspersed with "Oh, yes . . . yes . . ." and a funny laugh which causes him to pull his head back, eyes nearly closed, seeming to shake with merriment somewhere deep inside himself as if in secret communion with more than is apparent to others. When about to speak, he has a peculiar way of lifting up his cigarette and examining it closely with a little frown and gulping several times before saying anything.

Often he says sharply truthful things to people, then hastens to soften any personal sting his words might seem to carry. He is always simple, direct, friendly. People invariably are won to him with instantaneous affection. At first his pleased chortling comments give him an aspect of rare innocence and glib naïveté, which quite belies the fire of universal comprehension that burns at the core of him.

One of the very best stylists in America, his prose is rich and colorful. An experimentalist of the first order, he has enriched the form of the novel and widened its potentialities as has no other writer in our country. *Three Soldiers* is a powerful and moving book. I had also been captivated by his *Rosinante to the Road Again*, impressions of Spain, his poetry and numerous magazine articles.

One of the fine things about Dos is that he never sets himself up about his writing, never seems to believe that he is doing anything remarkable. He is the most unassuming man I know. When once I expressed my warm feelings about his work, he replied with real surprise. "Well, I'm darn glad I can make a living writing."

I was always pleased and flattered when he sought me out. Frequently he would dart into my apartment, or, if I was out, would sit on the front step in the sun, reading a paper, eating an orange and waiting for me.

"I write a bit in the morning," he said, "then I just have to pop out somewhere."

Once he remarked, "Sometimes I get absorbed in something and don't want to see anybody. The trouble is that when you do get around to wanting companionship you never seem able to find anybody."

He never liked to talk shop and with great reluctance would tell what he was working on. Once, later in New York, he did say, about his famous trilogy, *The 42nd Parallel, 1919* and *The Big Money*, as he was completing his last volume: "I haven't any more use for some of my characters, and I wish to God I could kill them off or forget about them."

At that time I was just completing *Stones Awake*. "That's no trouble if you use a Mexican setting," I remarked. "I can kill mine off by truckloads and it's quite natural."

He chortled over that.

A large man, though he doesn't look it especially, Dos could stow away enormous dinners and loved to walk, and how he walked! For three or four hours every afternoon, his feet would hit the earth, a bit on the heel, with a determined air of getting somewhere, his head back, his nose eagerly sniffing the breeze, his eyes squinting to see all they could; thus he would cover mile after mile. We went out to Tenayuca, Tacuba, Ixtapalapa, to the Hill of the Star where three centuries before, every fifty-two years, the Aztecs used to renew fire in celebration of their gratitude that the gods had not destroyed the world.

Often I wondered how Dos, with his poor eyesight, could see so much, for his prose reeks with the richest sensitivity of sight, colors, shapes, laid on lavishly. But on the top of the Hill of the Star, he pulled out a pair of opera glasses and studied the landscape minutely on all sides and asked many detailed questions.

At that time, suffering from a slight ailment which had al-

ready cost me four operations, I found it difficult to keep up with Dos. One day we walked clear to Atzacapotzalco, then to Tacuba, where we had a beer. We had been walking about three hours, but John was still insatiable; he wanted to go striding off to Los Remedios, about ten miles or so in the hills, but though I enjoy mountain climbing and have gotten to a few notable eminences, I was not so fond of walking as that; I much prefer the back of a horse.

Later Dos came back to Mexico with his newly acquired wife, Katie, a pretty, quick girl with a fine sense of humor and much originality. At first I thought John had a sublime indifference to her; for his legs were so long, his head so full of many things, he was forever marching off so rapidly, that it must have taxed Katie at times to keep up. But just when Dos seemed striding off to grab a star, he would unexpectedly show Katie bluff tenderness and concern. I had an idea they understood each other uncommonly well.

They had driven down to Mexico in a little runabout, Katie, because of John's poor eyesight, doing the driving. They pulled up, luggage and all, in front of the Hotel Ritz on Francisco Madero Avenue. Katie, being on the sidewalk side, jumped out to see about rooms. A policeman told Dos he couldn't park there.

John peered helplessly at the hotel entrance, then moved over to the driver's seat. It was late dusk, the traffic heavy.

Katie came out, only to find him gone, and was frantic. But when she was quite sure he must have cracked up, he came sailing along to pick her up.

Nothing much had happened! At the first intersection he had merely knocked the traffic cop right off his little box.

John's throat was in his mouth. Perhaps he saw himself in a Mexican jail for the rest of his life. But the policeman jumped

up, saluted him and smiled. Perhaps he reasoned that anyone who had the temerity to dump him off his box was so influential he had better be left alone. Maybe it was just Mexican politeness.

FINIT CORONAT OPUS

IN 1926 I WAS INVITED TO WASHINGTON to address the Second Conference on the Cause and Cure of War—a reunion held at intervals by the five oldest national women's clubs in the United States.

I shared the platform with Parker Moon, author of a masterful book on world imperialism; Carrie Chapman Catt acted as chairman. My endeavor was to give a sedate but truthful talk covering the historical and factual relations between the two countries but pointing out that the machinations of the petroleum companies and their sordid utilization of Colby and Nervous Nellie Kellogg, hence of the high offices of State, to further their petty interests, was at the expense of the rest of us. This intrigue, in which the notorious Doheny of Teapot Dome was the dominating figure, was bringing the oil question to a new crisis. Armed intervention was not an idle possibility.

This part of my talk, well received, resulted in the Conference sending a commission of inquiry to the State Department and the adopting of some very straightforward resolutions.

I had no intention of throwing any bombshells, but a minor paragraph which dealt with former Ambassador Henry Lane Wilson, one of the least satisfactory representatives in the history of American diplomacy abroad, exploded the sessions.

I pointed out briefly how he had been closely connected in Mexico and in Chile to the Guggenheim interests, how intimate he was with the grafting Científico clique around dictator Díaz, how he had backed improper claims, how the pact overthrowing

Madero's government had been signed in the American Embassy, how he therefore had a direct moral responsibility in relation to the assassination of President Madero and Vice-President Pino Suárez.

When I had finished, a Mrs. Dawes, sister-in-law, I believe, of the Vice-President, leapt to her feet, quivering with such rage that she was quite incoherent. All I could understand was a reference to a remark in my talk in which I had said, "Now I shall put the icing on the cake." Mrs. Dawes assured those present I had "put arsenic in the icing."

Mrs. Catt called upon me to reply. I expressed regret that the emotional state of my interlocutor had prevented me from catching the rest of her remarks, but that if I had put arsenic in the icing, evidently the dose had not been strong enough.

My ill-mannered sally convulsed the house. Mrs. Dawes burst into tears and flung herself out of the session.

She was pounced upon by all the reporters. For the one and only time during the week of the sessions, news of the Conference hit the front pages. This seemed to trouble many of the good ladies exceedingly; their gentility was greater than their love of peace.

2

The next reaction to my talk came from Henry Lane Wilson himself, on the stationery of the Sphinx Arms Hotel in Indianapolis, where he had long been living, unable ever since his fiasco in Mexico—despite powerful connections—to get a new diplomatic post. He threatened me in sharp language, though not in so many words, with a libel suit.

This, I felt, would be an excellent Exhibit A in foreign relations. A friend in the Mexican department of Foreign Relations, assured me that in case of need every document in the Mexican archives concerning Wilson would be put at my disposal. I also had the offer of co-operation from Robert Hammond Murray,

who had made a lifework of collecting the signed documents of the ex-Ambassador.

Murray, at one time correspondent for the New York *World*, probably the most brilliant American journalist, except possibly John Reed, ever to visit Mexican soil, by his independent, truthful dispatches at the time of the difficulties of Ambassador Wilson with the Madero government had so incensed our representative that Murray had become *persona non grata* at the Embassy. Also Wilson tried, unsuccessfully, to get Murray fired from the *World*.

From that time on, Murray spent time and money collecting Wilsonia and claimed to have photostatic copies or originals of every document, even the most confidential, the Ambassador had ever sent to Washington. Much of the Murray collection was drawn upon by Ernest Gruening in his *Mexico and Its Heritage*, subsequently published, to substantiate his charges against the former Ambassador.

With all available artillery on hand, I was quite ready to have Wilson press his libel suit. I wrote him a timid letter, but so worded as to anger him into taking action.

In the meantime, Murray had written Mrs. Dawes, suggesting a debate between the Ambassador and me in Washington. She snapped at this bait and communicated the idea to the Ambassador. Wilson, for the first time smelling Murray's fine hand in the matter, drew in his horns.

He had been scorched before by Murray. Whenever Wilson seemed about to land another diplomatic job, Murray would fling his little black satchel of documents on the desk of the Secretary of State: "Appoint and I publish." Wilson was never appointed to anything. Also Murray had earlier published brilliant articles which had put the Ambassador on the spot.

Wilson now wrote me he would be content if I would retract

words attributed to me by the *Herald Tribune*, an organ he selected because it was Republican and friendly.

If he would send me the clipping, I advised him, I would, if my speech had been wrongly reported, gladly make a retraction.

I prepared the "retraction." To the *Herald Tribune* I wrote that on looking over their account of my Washington speech I had discovered that their correspondent had been singularly accurate. I presented additional incriminating data. Naturally the *Herald Tribune* did not print my communication.

But I had forwarded a copy to Henry Lane Wilson, then wintering in Florida. He wrote me a blustering letter, saying he had once won a libel suit against *Harper's Bazaar* for articles containing charges similar to mine.

Finally, tired of a mere letter-writing contest, I curtly reminded Wilson he had not been awarded a single cent of damages on the articles themselves, merely the astounding sum of six cents on the *advertisement* announcing the articles.

His next letter was sweetly humble, like the last gentle *shsh* out of a flat-tire. Shortly he was to publish his memoirs; he hoped I would read them and gain a better opinion of him.

I had not wished this controversy and had no desire to continue it if he wished to back water. However, the *Nation* sent me his memoirs to review.

Though his book is written in the pompous smug style of such memoirs, here and there decorated with strained attempts at humor, for anyone at all conversant with the behind-the-scenes history of Mexico it is a gold mine to learn of the supreme example of stupidity, would-be cunning, reactionaryism, obtuseness toward social forces, and the general danger to humanity at such moments of such diplomats.

Such as he are always at hand, it seems, whenever a social change occurs in the world which requires intellectual quick-

ness, tolerance and a fresh, pliable outlook, so that in general our State Department, especially during the McKinley to Hoover period, and today in Latin America—despite Roosevelt's noble intentions—with Sumner Welles and Jefferson Caffery pulling hidden strings, has been as consistently reactionary and blundering as any of the foreign offices of the world utilizing Power diplomacy.

I entitled my review of Wilson's book *Finit Coronat Opus*—a mean thrust at his responsibility in not preventing the death of Madero. A good part of this review was requoted in Nogales' remarkable book, *The Rape of Nicaragua*.

Wilson also turned on the pressure on the women's organizations and the Carnegie Peace Foundation—of which Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler was and is the head—which was to publish the report of the conference.

Dr. Butler suggested that the proceedings be published either without my talk or in such form as to avoid controversy. Carrie Chapman Catt, honorable to the core, though sagely knowing the ins and out of political shindigs, stoutly refused to permit the publication of any of the proceedings unless my talk were included. She submitted it to an authority on international affairs, and he assured her my talk contained valuable material which should be preserved.

She then sent me the full correspondence covering the deadlock and told me to do just what I felt about the matter. If I were willing to eliminate most of the paragraph on Henry Lane Wilson, she was sure the Foundation would proceed with the publication.

I could scarcely act the dog in the manger. The paragraph in question was not an essential part of my talk. Light on the petroleum issue was its chief feature. To refuse to pare my talk would be merely to bite off my nose to spite my face and also the noses of a lot of other folk. Though the publication of my

talk in mutilated form might seem a tacit admission I had been in the wrong, I told Mrs. Catt to patch up the disputed paragraph as she saw fit. It was reduced to several innocuous lines.

3

The Carnegie Foundation, established by the man who made part of his fortune out of war munitions, is a very equivocal organization, careful never to air any of the root causes of war in any way to endanger vested interests or profit-making, and is always pro-British. Every so often it sends a good-will representative through Latin America. It also gives assistance to the Pan-American society, for years little more than a closed corporation of powerful American interests having investments in Latin America. As might be expected, the good-will envoys selected have been utterly incapable of promoting good-will, have actually been persons who have very definitely promoted American aggression toward Latin America.

In 1928, it sent David P. Barrows, of the Political Science Department of the University of California, my own alma mater. Barrows has always been a big-stick imperialist.

It so happened I was in Central America when Barrows went through there. I had just interviewed Sandino, so that most of the local reporters were constantly on my trail, and the front pages were covered almost entirely by interviews with me. As I was just one jump ahead of Barrows, I gave the reporters his complete record. In this I was also helped by a clipping my mother had sent me by chance in which Barrows made the statement that the United States was privileged to intervene militarily anywhere, anytime, in Latin America. The reporters all quoted this gleefully when Barrows went through.

Barrows had been an officer in the ill-starred American expeditionary forces to Siberia; one of those, along with our diplomats and Red Cross officials, who most effectively promoted

the interests of the White armies, when the head of the mission, General Graves, was valiantly trying to avoid all partisan intervention. Barrows was also a strong-arm commandant in the Philippines. Time and again he had come out in support of the grossest aggressive measures toward Latin America. Fortunately he was allowed to exercise his blighting influence over the University of California as president for only a short time. Such was the first Carnegie Peace Foundation good-will emissary.

Shortly after that, the Foundation sent out Henry Kittredge Norton, a journalist, ridiculous for the extent to which he has apologized for American marine occupations. In numerous articles he had displayed his contempt for the Latin-American countries. His rôle had been constantly to sprinkle foot-powder on the pages of American publications to ease the boot of imperialism on to the American people.

More recently the Foundation has chosen Dana Munro, author of a book of considerable merit on the Central-American republics in which he whitewashes the bankers. Later he was adviser to the American Legation in Managua during our ill-starred marine intervention there, Minister to Haiti during the marine occupation there, and a consistent apologist, if of rather stuffed-shirt variety, for the old-style armed intervention policy, for everything of the worst imperialistic odor in our relations to that part of the world.

And so Heil Peace and Good Will!

FAKE DOCUMENTS

A PARTICULARLY FINE PERSON who came to Mexico at that time with Hubert Herring's Seminar was Herbert Croly, editor of the *New Republic*. We became quite well acquainted, though William of Orange was a loquacious gentleman compared to Croly, who rarely said more than a few sentences. As I am not particularly talkative myself, our luncheons mostly consisted of sitting and following our own trains of thoughts, with only occasional remarks to keep our rumination in the same channels.

Croly asked me to take him to a bull-fight. As we entered the Plaza de Toros, he remarked, "I suppose one should look at a spectacle of blood objectively and dispassionately."

This apprised me that probably he had not come with any particular gusto but merely as a social duty, feeling the need of witnessing a historic sport psychologically so close to a whole people.

He certainly looked at the spectacle objectively and dispassionately. He never uttered a word the whole function, but sat up straight and watched everything minutely, staying until the last bull had been slaughtered. I did once steal a glance around at a pretty señorita in a white mantilla and was rewarded with a smile, but I felt that this was a profanation of Croly's serious determination.

I explained each phase of the sport, told him of the historic antecedents, how it had been derived from the ancient Dyonisian bull-festival and from medieval knightly training when it

was customary for battle forces to tie burning faggots to bulls' horns and stampede the animals toward the enemy. I explained variants of the cape work.

But neither then nor after we left could I draw Croly out; to this day I haven't the slightest idea what his opinions on bull-fighting are. He was a great admirer of Hemingway's—recommended I read *The Sun Also Rises*—and I wish Croly had been alive when *Death in the Afternoon* appeared, for undoubtedly he would have commented upon it in the *New Republic*, and I might have learned of his reactions that afternoon of death in Mexico.

Croly offered me double rates for anything I might write for the *New Republic* and shortly after wired me for an article at the height of the petroleum controversy covering the point: "*Whose Property Is Kellogg Protecting?*"

I secured an exact record of all the producing companies' output, acreage under exploitation and undeveloped holdings. The result, when analyzed, showed that if the English interests, which at the eleventh hour had decided to abide by the Mexican laws, and the conformist American companies were excluded, Mr. Kellogg was going to bat almost entirely for Doheny of Teapot Dome scandal. Kellogg himself, however, gave to the press a curious list of companies, some of which were not even operating in Mexico.

Most of the recalcitrant companies had grave title difficulties, though later, Reuben Clark, who was investigating the question for Morrow and succeeded him as Ambassador, told me solemnly there was no truth in the rumors that the titles of any important companies were not sound. By the time he spoke, however, most of the companies had straightened out their titles in one way or another, even to the extent—where necessary—of bribing Mexican officials. Of course, in the past, every method from murder on down to petty theft and forgery of

documents had been resorted to by certain elements in the field.

Sometime later, I collected all my material on the titles of four wealthy properties in Mexico, showing by carefully documented study how they had been obtained—murder, destruction of legal records, forgery. Married couples had been divorced by forged records, couples were arbitrarily married by forged records, children were kidnapped—a long trail of bloody violence and crookedness.

In such days the law was that of the wolf, the strongest and cleverest won out, the strongest usually being those with the longest bank account. Naturally, later efforts of the Mexican government to bring order out of this chaos was bound to meet with great opposition by the companies and by the American government. Kellogg went to bat for them. He called Mexico a Bolshevik country. But in most states we now have stricter oil legislation than Mexico ever thought of proposing those days. By the same logic, Texas, Oklahoma, California and other American states are now Bolshevik. It all depends on which foot the shoe pinches.

By the time I sent my four petroleum articles to the *New Republic*, my friend Croly was dead, and the other editors were afraid of libel. Though they had made me a small preliminary payment, they turned them over to the *Nation*, which after considerable delay also advised me they were afraid to publish.

The articles had cost me years of investigation, weary months of going over court-records, expensive payments for transcripts, considerable expense in securing sworn affidavits. The materials were so dramatic I formulated a novel covering much of them. But for years I could find no chance to write it; even when I did, the writing was repeatedly interrupted by financial worries. The book was not published until 1934 under the title

Black River. By that year the timeliness of the material was largely lost.

The characters in the novel are entirely invented, though it would have been impossible not to have used in modified form certain true incidents. Nevertheless one prominent oil man promptly and without justification identified himself with one of my characters. He remarked that he was in the book in not too flattering light, but was rather proud of the fact. He then whispered that a certain incident related in the novel had precipitated the divorce between himself and his wife. As this particular incident had been entirely a figment of my imagination, I was highly amused.

2

In 1926 and 1927, Coolidge and Kellogg were all for the big-stick policy toward Mexico. In this they were abetted by Ambassador James R. Sheffield, a narrow corporation lawyer, who lacked the slightest inkling of what the Mexican revolution really meant, judging all its acts, all the unleashed forces, by the neat yardstick of corporation technicalities.

A choleric soul, on May 1, when the labor day parade was held and all traffic stopped in Mexico City, he insisted in driving the Embassy auto back and forth through the ranks of the marchers. Not only was this an insolent use of Embassy immunity, but it showed ignorance and bad taste; it was an affront to the government, of which the President had been elected on a labor party ticket, whose head, Luis N. Morones, was in the cabinet. The parade itself was reviewed by the President from the balcony of the National Palace.

This was also an epoch of fake documents—an industry which always flourishes in times of international crises. Officials of all nations then gullibly or hypocritically seize upon such documents to further their own mistaken policies. In Sheffield's day there were numerous leaks of confidential documents from our

Embassy. Even confidential reports directly from Sheffield to Kellogg were drifting out into the hands of the Mexican government and others. The recipient of some of these was Luis N. Morones, Minister of Industry, Commerce and Labor. Once when I went to interview him, he pointed to a stack of photostats of such documents, several of which he gave me to read, one being a confidential pettifogging report by Sheffield to Kellogg in which he spoke of each and every government official—without ever having met a single one of them—in rancorous, belittling and scurrilous manner.

Frank Tannenbaum, out of the bigness of his heart, decided to bring Sheffield and leading Mexican cabinet officials together. Tannenbaum naïvely felt that if Sheffield were to meet some Mexican officials, he would have a changed attitude.

Tannenbaum achieved fame as a youth when, after frequenting Emma Goldman circles, he led a band of hunger marchers into a fashionable New York church. Instead of receiving the bread and wine of Christ, he was given a year's sentence on Blackwells Island—long before Hitler was ever heard of. Prominent persons became interested in him and financed his way through the university. He did a number of books on labor problems and prison conditions, some interesting articles in leading magazines, and at the time of the petroleum controversy was making a study of Mexican agrarian problems for Brookings Institution in Washington. He is now a lecturer at Columbia University.

He was very intimate with Morones, head of the Mexican labor movement, for whom he had an overwhelming adoration. And so Frank arranged a private dinner at San Angel Inn in order that misguided Sheffield could have his eyes opened by meeting Morones, Luis León and Puig Casauranc.

Presently into Morones' office came the secret report of the dinner to Kellogg, marked "Strictly Confidential: To the Sec-

retary of State only." It contained a scarcely flattering description of the three cabinet ministers and their points of view and pilloried Tannenbaum as a radical, traitorously trafficking with horrid Mexicans.

I tried unsuccessfully to get this document published in the United States. It would, of course, have blown Sheffield clear out of the water, and it would have required some tall explaining by Kellogg.

Fortunately Sheffield was on the skids anyway. He had overreached himself in many improper ways.

3

I met Sheffield only once. He had to sign an emergency passport for me when I wanted to go to Central America. With his pen poised over the page, he asked me with a scarcely veiled sneer whether I didn't think there was a lot of resemblance between the Mexican and Russian revolutions.

Two people can kid as well as one, so I drawled: "Not at all, Ambassador, the Russian revolution cut a clean swathe right across all former social institutions, whereas Mexico's upheaval is a reactionary revolution."

"A what!" he exclaimed.

"A reactionary revolution. The constitution provides for the return of all communal lands stolen since 1857; if there were a Bolshevik revolution it would not attempt to restore old legal principles and titles overthrown by land-grabbers, but would simply nationalize all land without legal precedent or provision for payment. Similarly, the petroleum laws seek to re-establish the old Spanish law precepts that definitely separated surface, pasturage and sub-soil rights. . . ."

His mouth opened and closed. Hastily he dipped his pen, signed my passport and terminated the conversation.

I met Nervous Nellie Kellogg only once, at a general press

conference in Washington. He made a miserable appearance for the head of the cabinet of the greatest nation on earth. He came out shuffling and trembling all over, rubbing his thin old hands nervously like an Uriah Heep, and saying in a high, old-woman falsetto squeak, "Well, boys, what's the news this morning?"

Personally I wouldn't have trusted him to wrap groceries in a country store. Yet the man who caused the bombing of women and children in Nicaragua was given the Nobel Peace Prize for a set of peace pacts as effective as a gas balloon in a fire.

4

The most clear-sighted man in Coolidge's cabinet with regard to Mexican affairs, though his advice was coldly ignored, was Herbert Hoover. A former secretary of his, George Barr Baker, went at this critical time on a secret mission to Mexico in the guise of a newspaper correspondent.

Baker, a very keen man, actually did send up several news dispatches with some sharp stings on the end, which must have thrown the fear of God into Kellogg, who well understood their cryptic meaning. Baker held a conference with Calles—actually prearranged—to whom he handed a bunch of fake documents, and Calles then opened a drawer and handed him a packet of secret documents, equally false, showing America's sinister designs on Mexico. This pricked the bubble of official intriguing with documents on both sides.

Kellogg sniffed the breeze. There was much newspaper talk, of a sudden, of a certain unauthorized emissary being arrested under the Logan act and his documents being seized when he recrossed the border. But Kellogg never dared press the matter. By now there had developed such danger, if the fake document racket and other smelly matters were aired, that a change of policy toward Mexico became almost inevitable.

But if officialdom had made a bonfire of secret documents,

Mr. Hearst, long bitter toward Mexico because of his endangered properties there, vast in extent, had not. It could be expected that Mr. Hearst would leave his trail across the walls of any difficulty. When a batch of photostats (that later turned out to be false) came into his hands, he decided to publish. These fabricated documents had been floating around Mexico for some time. I myself could have bought them for a few hundred pesos. Some of them were offered to George Seldes, at that time in Mexico on a special assignment for the *Chicago Tribune*, which also wished to raise a stink about Mexico; but he had the wisdom to turn them down. The joke on Hearst is that he is reputed to have paid twenty-five thousand dollars for these fly-by-night defamations that no one in Mexico would have bought for a few hundred pesos.

Before looking them over, I had imagined some might be authentic, but every one had been forged and not even cleverly.

The names of Borah, La Follette and other high American dignitaries were dragged through these documents as having received bribes from the Mexican government. Honest friends of decent international relations were besmirched. The documents likewise tended to prove that the Mexican government was a cesspool of iniquity, corruption and outright bolshevism.

Years later I talked with Senator Robert La Follette about them. Facetiously, he told me his feelings had been mostly hurt by the fact that Hearst apparently thought he could be bought for \$15,000, while old Tom Heflin was put down for \$40,000. La Follette had often regretted he had not sued Hearst at the time, but the other senators did not want to bother. Ernest Gruening, charged with having received \$10,000 to investigate the British coal strike, brought suit against all the Hearst papers for a total of a million dollars or so and eventually settled out of court.

A Senate investigation was precipitated. Sheffield testified

that when his advice was asked about the documents prior to publication, he had honestly thought them authentic. He would.

Soon the investigation was dropped like a hot cake, as are most official investigations as soon as they really begin to disclose something. Neither government was anxious to admit that it had been trafficking in secret documents; nor would it be nice to reveal to the dear American public that while Mr. Sheffield was so busily getting hold of such worthless paper and shipping it up to Washington, the most confidential matters entrusted to his own sacred care were so easily passing into the hands of the Mexican authorities and other outsiders.

Later, quite by accident, I discovered a leak in the Embassy files still existent after Morrow's arrival: how documents were taken out of secret locked files at night, photostated, and returned before morning. I sent him a note about this, which he never acknowledged or mentioned to me. Probably some frightened secretary closed up the leak and never told him.

MORROW COMES TO MEXICO

THE MEXICAN SITUATION REACHED a blundering climax. Complete rupture of diplomatic relations seemed inevitable. At this ticklish juncture, the appointment of Dwight W. Morrow of the House of Morgan as Ambassador was dramatically announced. Things had gotten to such a sorry pass that a boss rather than a blundering straw boss had to be sent. As my friend Miguel Mendizabal put it at the time: "Morgan conceivably might be dumb, but we can be sure that Morgan's partner is a clever man."

The appointment was well publicized. Morrow was hailed as a great liberal, a great scholar, an absent-minded genius who got on the wrong trains and put his potatoes in his pockets, a self-made man and many other things. But it looked like merely a new stunt to sugar-coat dollar diplomacy—to conquer Mexico with a smile instead of with threats and dollars.

By the time Morrow arrived, the first and second debt settlements arranged by Lamont of the House of Morgan had collapsed. It seemed likely that Morrow would be not so interested in the oil impasse as in laying a new basis for a new debt agreement and perhaps establish proper conditions for a new loan.

Mr. George Rublee, a Progressive Republican and Washington lawyer, hired by Morrow as an adviser, looked me up soon after Morrow arrived and invited me to lunch at Prendes' restaurant. An extremely tall man, Rublee seemed almost shy—a retiring, thoughtful type. His wispy gray hair never stayed

combed. He had an embarrassed, absent-minded manner. His particular sphere of investigation was the Church and, to a lesser extent, the labor question, and he went into these matters thoroughly. I introduced him to several key people. He arranged for me to have tea with the Ambassador and his wife.

It was with some curiosity that I taxied out to the trim gray Embassy in the Colonia Roma and around to the equally trim residence in the rear, located on land given, I believe, by that most estimable of Mexico's oil bandits, Doheny.

But I find I remember very little of the conversation that first afternoon. Rublee had very graciously told me that Morrow was very anxious to ask me some things about Mexico. Morrow, it soon became evident, had no such anxiety. He was merely desirous of telling me what he intended to do about Mexico in vague terms and high-sounding generalities.

Rublee, Mrs. Morrow and myself chatted a bit before Morrow arrived. Either then or later, she told me of an anecdote of Mr. Morrow's when courting her. At a tea when she asked him how many lumps he took, he had said coyly, "Why, don't you remember?" She had told him sharply she had more important things to remember than keeping track of his tastes. Soon after, she changed her tune.

Presently Morrow came in, a short fellow about five feet in height, with a big head and wispy mouse-colored hair, even but strong features. Glasses and square-toed shoes gave him a professorial look. He might easily have been mistaken for a professor of ethics at some backwater private college, who probably took his services as dean of the local Methodist church very seriously and whose wife would make him wear rubbers he would always forget.

He said "hello" in a very casual manner and took up some newspapers which he read without paying any further attention to the rest of us.

At last he muttered something about a detail of American politics, something quite Greek to me, asked Mrs. Morrow about some domestic matters, and laid aside his papers to take tea. Mostly, he seemed bored and impatient. Rublee kept the conversation going. Later, Morrow began talking earnestly about what he intended to do in his new post—nothing specific. Mostly, the subject was banalities about the effect of the altitude, the weather, the fascinating quality of Mexican life, his admiration for Calles.

I excused myself shortly, after arranging to take Mrs. Morrow to a modernist school in which she was interested, an engagement which never materialized.

Mr. Morrow came out to the house-door with me, and as the maid gave me my hat, he looked over my attire minutely. Abruptly, in a more cordial tone, he said I should come to see him any time; he was eager to talk about Mexican matters with me. I suspected then, and later felt certain, his only interest was to be sure I didn't write anything that might embarrass his efforts.

"What are people around town saying about me?" he asked eagerly.

I told him that I had heard only favorable remarks, some of them a bit reserved, except for that made by one lawyer who was one of a small clique of die-hard Díaz aristocrats.

The day or so previous Ambassador Morrow had attended a reception at which General Roberto Cruz was present. General Cruz, at Calles' orders, had just lined up four supposed would-be assassins of Obregón, one a Catholic priest, and without trial had shot them down—within a stone's throw of the largest hotel in Mexico, and less than half a block from the American consulate—a brutal, high-handed terroristic act. Cruz himself had directed the assassinations, a big black cigar in his gloating, fat, young face.

"This lawyer," I continued to Morrow, "said that he could not understand how a representative of the United States government could shake the hand of a murderer, still dripping with the blood of his victims."

The Ambassador jerked short at these words, and a black thundercloud spread across his brow. He resented the remark deeply.

"Well, come to see me often," he said curtly.

I wrote a very strong article condemning the authorities for this arbitrary shooting, laying the blame directly on Calles.

2

As a result of my remarks and my article, Morrow requested from the police their evidence against the victims, and shortly Rublee put into my hands photostats of the four supposed signed confessions.

As they had been brutally tortured, this evidence had to be properly discounted. But two of the men, if their confessions were authentic, were obviously guilty of an attempt on Obregón's life. The evidence against the brother of Padre Pro, if very circumstantial, was also strong, but by no means sufficient to warrant his execution. No direct evidence was given to prove the priest guilty, though there were definite links between him and the others.

A dark blotch was thrown upon Calles and his administration. What a moral victory in his struggle with the Church he would have gained, one that would have resounded over the world, if he had succeeded in convicting Padre Pro with proper evidence in open court. As it is, the Calles government convicted itself before the entire world of having cheaply sought ready victims and thus having possibly covered up the real criminals.

As a result of several such articles, my friend Roberto Haber-

man, employed by the Mexican consulate in New York and liaison officer between Morones and Gompers, culled out my more critical statements and sent them down to Morones.

From President Calles' own office a friend came to see me, saying that through an agent in the United States I had been recommended for deportation, that I had better seek an interview with Calles and explain things.

I thanked my voluntary informant, said that if anything in my articles were untruthful the Mexican government had plenty of means of dealing with me, that my address would remain the same.

I mentioned the incident in a letter to a New York friend, Charles Erwin, connected with the United Press and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers but who also did publicity work for the Mexican government. Immediately upset, feeling it would be unfortunate if I were bothered, he rushed to see the Mexican consul in New York, Calles' half-brother, Arturo Elías, recently indicted for fraud in the management of the Mexican post-office. Elías at once cabled Calles.

Calles replied that my articles were at hand, had been translated and read, but that he had had no intention of ordering my deportation nor would he order it in the future. This showed considerable forbearance, especially when he had never been known to show the slightest generosity toward his critics.

3

Morrow certainly got results. In a few months he had a petroleum compromise patched up. He and Rublee told me how this was accomplished.

He had begun his famous breakfasts with Calles, for which eager newspaper correspondents supplied a ham-and-eggs menu. Calles had asked him what was needed to bring about better feeling between the two countries. A favorable Supreme Court

decision would help clear the atmosphere, was Morrow's reply. Calles promised to get it.

The humorous commentary on the independence of Mexican judiciary was that in a few weeks the Supreme Court handed down a favorable decision to an American company. If this did not touch upon the major points at issue, it was publicized as giving everything the Americans demanded.

Morrow then called in the American oil people and made them shave down their demands to the bone. He then dealt directly with the Mexican authorities, got their minimum demands, never letting the contending parties get near each other. But having two sets of minimum demands, he was able to trade. The final pact largely followed the lines of the 1923 Bucareli agreements which Calles had set aside.

Though I saw a bit of Morrow, had lunch with him alone on several occasions, our minds never moved together. Morrow was one of the players in the game; I was on the side-lines, which has both its advantages and disadvantages when it comes to seeing the whole play. Morrow was a practical man, interested in immediate and also long-time solutions. I was interested in social processes as a phenomena. So far as I had any sympathies in the oil question, they were purely humanitarian. Personally, I didn't care whether Doheny, or anybody like him, a type whom I consider an enemy to America, an enemy to mankind, lost his pants or not.

Wildcat wastefulness had featured Doheny's whole development of Mexican oil. The taking out of that oil would leave nothing noble behind, merely scars on the earth and disrupted unhappy communities. Oil had been a bone of international contention, had promoted disorder, revolts, banditry, had led to schemes of dismemberment of Mexico, had brought the two countries to the brink of war. It was a dark picture of violence and greed rarely equaled in human annals.

I was with Morrow in any attempt to settle this question in any halfway decent manner. It would benefit both countries, and by and large Morrow's settlement was probably wise. For the first time in many years, relations between the United States and Mexico were put upon a dignified basis. By and large, his settlement recognized Mexico's principle of nationalization of the subsoil, except for pre-1917 property; it set the boundaries of petroleum exploitation in Mexico, ended the wildcat era, and brought order into the industry and into international affairs.

But if Mexico got a breathing spell, ultimately his solution could not endure. It was based, not on basic principles of Mexican law or the revolutionary demands, so much as upon a temporary compromise between several powerful forces. Morrow prevented an international rumpus, but to do it he delayed some inevitable solutions by a decade. The Morrow agreement set up a distinction in governmental royalties collected from, and control over, properties acquired before 1917 and those acquired later. Eventually no government could permit such a distinction, which favored the wealthy and powerful companies at the expense of new ones which might be formed, giving the former an even bigger advantage than they already had.

Today President Cárdenas has indicated that if the Morrow agreement is not technically set aside, it will not be allowed to hold. Trial balloon legislation was proposed recently which would wipe out royalty distinctions between property acquired before and after 1917 and in other ways undermine the Morrow agreement. The British interests in Mexico recently accepted the royalty principle and it is only a question of time until the American companies, daily losing ground by their obstinacy, come down off their privileged platform. In any case the Mexican government has now gone into the oil busi-

ness definitely itself as a competitor in the general market and has expanded its regulations over production and export. In practice the Morrow compromise is already being junked.

4

"Morrow killed the Mexican revolution with a smile," Miguel Mendizabal told me.

Morrow did not kill the revolution, but temporarily he clipped its nails. He drew out the heat of its militancy, and he brought about a full transmutation of the character and beliefs of Calles, its outstanding leader. This was not really difficult, for Morrow came at a time when enthusiasm was on the wane and when Calles and his clique had become wealthy landholders, manufacturers and holders of frontier gambling and other vice concessions. Despite verbal pyrotechnics and assertions of undying loyalty to the people, the politicians on top of the heap, including Calles, were busy feathering their own nests in a manner that would have turned Al Capone green with envy. But as Morrow never measured correctly the full might of the popular forces with which he was dealing, Calles, who followed his advice, soon marred his whole career and eventually was driven out of the country as a traitor to the things he had once honorably espoused.

But Morrow's diplomatic efforts were on such an enlightened plane compared to those of Sheffield, one at least had to applaud his changed technique. On request, I wrote several articles about him for the *New York Times*, personal sketches, an outline of his proposed policies and accomplishments. For the time being I avoided any long-range discussion of his philosophy of public affairs or the ultimate deleterious effects some of them might have. Praise for him seemed necessary at a time when his attempts to bring a decent approach to a grave foreign issue

were under fire by the long blundering Sheffields, Kelloggs, oil forces and die-hards.

If Morrow was pleased with the articles, he never mentioned the fact; later, after we had had lunch together and I was about to do a third article, he remarked:

"Mr. Beals, you wouldn't be able to write for the *New York Times* if it were not for me. I recommended your name to them."

"I am sorry if such be the case," I replied. "That quite precludes my writing anything further for them about you or your policies in Mexico."

He jerked back startled. Apparently he had wished to put me in a position of having to be grateful to him for even the chance to do the articles, and apparently did not believe I would balk at such violation of professional ethics.

MORE OF MORROW

FROM THE PETROLEUM QUESTION, Morrow moved on to the Church imbroglio, which he felt had to be solved if Mexico was to be put on a going and pacific basis. This was meddling with a vengeance, and with an even thornier problem. In the first place this was not particularly one of the duties set forth in the State Department manuals for the conduct of diplomats. The Church, too, supported a larger personnel and showed a bigger balance sheet than even the oil industry.

As in the case of oil, the minimum Church demands were sought. The worst hump for the Church was the constitutional proviso obliging individual priests to register with the government. This, the Church argued, would destroy it as a juridical entity and interfere with its internal organization. For this reason the priests had gone on strike. It was now finally agreed that the selection and registration of priests should be done by the Church authorities.

Morrow argued to the Church that the religious laws were "war laws," but even so should be abided by provided Catholics could enjoy complete civil liberties with the right to propagandize against obnoxious legislation. To work out part of the settlement, a secret reunion was held in the little fortress island of San Juan de Ulloa, just off Vera Cruz, where no correspondents could reach. Thither journeyed Morrow, Calles and other high Mexican functionaries. Unbeknown to the world, a prominent Catholic functionary, then in forced exile, was given

personal guarantees so he could be with them there. Later I heard that a high American Church functionary, barred from admission to Mexico, also attended, but never could get Morrow to admit this.

When everything seemed rosy, all was junked by the Vatican, which unexpectedly demanded the right to give religious instruction in public schools and to engage in elementary school education—rights the Church had not enjoyed since 1857. In fact, in few countries in the world, except such as Perú and Paraguay, are priests allowed to give instruction in public schools.

Simultaneously the *Osservatore Romano*, the semi-official newspaper of the Vatican, bristled with vicious attacks on Morrow. He was called a petroleum magnate with oil wells in Tampico.

There were many stories at that time about Morrow's supposedly fabulous investments in Mexico. The Communists, among them David Siqueiros, the painter, and many others, had told me—in fact, it was published in *El Machete*, the Communist organ—that Morrow was buying up the whole state of Morelos. As is frequently customary with loose-tongued propaganda aimed toward sectarian purposes, no proof whatever substantiated these charges.

Morrow had bought the Davis house in Cuernavaca to which he could repair frequently to escape the rigors of the high altitude of Mexico City—a charming residence, which he planned, when he left, to donate to the American government so that future ambassadors not so well heeled would have a similar opportunity to escape and rest. Unfortunately his wishes have never been carried out.

I asked Morrow point-blank about his supposed purchases of land in Morelos.

He laughed. "Before becoming Ambassador, I disposed of

every interest, however slight, which had to do with Mexico. I would be an utter fool to invest a single penny here. It would jeopardize my whole effort. As a matter of fact, I would not be in the least interested—even were I not Ambassador—in investing anything in Mexico. I can make far sounder investments elsewhere. There is not a particle of truth in the story.”

Nor did he have any oil wells in Mexico. Several small companies, such as the Franco-Española, with insignificant production, were controlled by the House of Morgan. But Morrow was supposed to have severed all connection there.

Rublee brought me the copies of the *Osservatore Romano* containing the anti-Morrow articles, also other materials, suggesting I might find them useful in doing an article on the Catholic question. The information, along with other data, did provide an excellent basis for an article. But after I wrote it, I could find no magazine in America willing to touch the thorny subject.

Morrow, however, persisted in his efforts to settle the Church question and finally succeeded—pressure this time having been brought on Rome itself—in pushing through a pact along the lines first proposed.

But like the oil compromise, Morrow’s Church pact has not stood the test of time. It was voided almost as soon as he left the country, mostly at the expense of the Church.

2

Morrow was also working on Mexican finances. Mexico, he averred, should become financially sound before it attempted to meet any back obligations. It should pay cash faithfully for everything as it went along—the way anybody re-establishes his credit.

The first duty was for the government to provide for its

current needs, for roads, schools, improvements. Its people came ahead of any debt claims. After domestic needs could be amply met and there was a surplus, only then should back obligations be faced.

The national debt of Mexico, Morrow considered to be a mere bagatelle. Once Mexico became a really going concern, the country, he remarked to me several times, could pay off its debt with one hand tied behind its back. But the country should not meet any debt at the expense of public welfare. If forced to do so, prosperity would be delayed; orderly government would be impossible; the cost to Mexico and to ourselves, in the long run, would be much greater. In other words, it was foolish to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. This was undoubtedly broad-gauge policy.

For eventual payment, Morrow was determined to put over a long-range plan. It never occurred to him that most of the world's debts may have to be canceled or scaled down unless mankind is willing to enter centuries of dark enslavement. It never occurred to him that, with the dark weight of debts, distribution may never balance with production, that many foreign markets may be forever lost or that the whole mass-production system must be thoroughly reorganized if people are not to pass under the brutal military rule of Hitlers.

Morrow merely thought in terms of sound business practice quite removed from theories of social systems. He predicted permanent capitalism without fully realizing that capitalism itself was evolving toward a monopoly stage. Within that framework, he labored on broader principles than purely private Shylock greed. His program, he insisted, would eventually give every creditor a better chance to get his money and at the same time insure a prosperous Mexico.

To carry out such a program all outstanding obligations should be examined. It would be foolish to dish out money

to whatever person sat most insistently on the doorstep—in this case the House of Morgan—instead of attempting to provide a general arrangement for paying everybody with the maximum possible justice. Other things being equal, internal obligations should have precedence over foreign obligations (this was Wall Street heresy) for this would mean the money would remain to circulate in the country for new enterprise, hence provide more prosperity and greater government revenues. Americans with private claims should have more consideration than foreign bondholders. He put the latter in the ultimate category for payment.

However, in the end, his financial program for Mexico was knocked in the head completely.

3

In collaboration with the Institute of Current World Affairs—the Crane Foundation—Morrow had its representative in Mexico, Dr. Eyler N. Simpson, a good friend of mine, now a professor at Princeton, make studies of the *henequén* industry of Yucatán and of cattle industries; Morrow was also trying to get tariff readjustments to facilitate the entry of certain Mexican products into the United States market.

Especially did Morrow work on the agrarian program. He convinced Calles that no more land should be taken unless payment were made in cash instead of with bonds or by time payments. This meant, of course, a complete end of Mexico's entire agrarian reform. Soon Calles, who in the first two years of his administration had provided more land for the peasants than any other president, came out with the startling public statement that the whole policy had been a complete failure. After a given date no more land would be subdivided.

And so, under Portes Gil and Ortiz Rubio, puppets of Calles, land distribution was brought to an end in state after state,

until it had practically ceased throughout the country, except here and there where the peasants remained particularly militant.

To bring about Morrow's change of policy, the peasant leaders had to be jailed, shipped off to Islas Mariás prison without trial, killed right and left. Out of Morrow's halting of agrarian reform in Mexico came a reign of governmental terrorism in the rural districts. A great hope nearly died in Mexico.

Undoubtedly the land reform had been carried out with innumerable injustices, was often inefficient, was often shot through with graft and special privilege. Generals, high politicians, among them Calles himself, could hold big estates immune from molestation by the agrarian reform, while others without political pull felt the full effect of the law. But the solution was to have reformed the agrarian reform, not its total abolition.

For agrarian reform, not the petroleum question, was the key to the whole Mexican revolution. There was its root cause, there lurked its deepest aspirations. Without proper and equitable distribution or proper control of land, no new Mexico could arise; it would sink back into its feudal miseries, later to go through the same old upheaval. In this direction Morrow's influence was definitely pernicious, uncalled-for and dangerous.

Here again Morrow did not properly measure the forces of his time or of Mexico. He slowed up the solution of Mexican agrarian problems by many years, but in the end Mexico once more had to face the problem boldly. Here again Calles was completely discredited by his own greed and by his succumbing to Morrow's influence.

Calles, driven out, was succeeded by Cárdenas, who took up reform where Calles had dropped it, and in thirty-three months distributed more land than in all the nineteen years previous put together, and this time with no payments at all and with-

out special favor to American properties. He has accompanied it with education, technical instruction, rural credit, and numerous other instrumentalities to make each rural community an independent and going concern.

Morrow set up a poorly constructed dike against the clamor of the Mexican people for land; the tide has washed over it and not a trace of the dike is left.

4

Whether directly urged by Morrow, or as a consequence of a change of trend in Mexico, American capital began pouring into the country. We were going through a period of enormous speculative inflation and were "lousy" with money. Three great American corporate institutions at that time were reaching out for control in nearly all countries: the National City Bank, the Electric Bond and Share Company (through its subsidiary the American and Foreign Power Company), and the International Telephone and Telegraph Company. All three now rushed into Mexico. The Southern Pacific Railway had hastened to push through its long interrupted connection between Nayarit and Guadalajara, a very difficult mountain stretch, at a cost of approximately \$30,000,000, thus connecting up the West Coast of Mexico and the United States by a shorter rail connection through Mexican territory, with the capital.

Among other new interests which came in were the Chase National Bank (since withdrawn) and subsidiaries of the United Fruit and Standard Fruit companies. The Standard Oil of California, closely allied with Obregón, expanded its distributing system on the West Coast and in the center and secured control of about a million acres of potential oil land—nearly half of which Cárdenas has since nationalized.

It is quite possible that Mexico would have repeated the dreary story of the Díaz epoch had it not been for our 1929

financial collapse which stopped the renewed fever of American companies again to monopolize Mexican resources. This monopolization was against the whole spirit and trend of the Mexican revolution. It was made possible through the advent of Morrow and his alliance with Calles. But since then the country has swung back to the policies set aside by the one and betrayed by the other.

SANDINO

IN 1927 I HAD TAKEN A TRIP TO Guatemala, Salvador and Honduras, overland, south through Mexico, along the coastal plain of Chiapas, and crossing the frontier at the Suchiate River, then from Ayutla, south through the glistening coffee region to Guatemala City.

There I saw my old friend, the Mexican poet, Luis Quintanilla, at that time first secretary of the Mexican Embassy. I called upon Minister Geissler, interviewed President Orellana, investigated labor and social conditions, visited Antigua, mingled with the beautiful Quiché Indians.

From Guatemala I went overland to Santa Ana and San Salvador.

Another trip took me to the port of La Unión where I embarked for Amapala, the Pacific Island port of entry of Honduras—a magnificent trip across the great Gulf of Fonseca, studded with little islands and ringed about by jagged mountains. A long launch ride took me from there to San Lorenzo—where yellow fever hasn't yet been quite stamped out—and up the rugged mountains to Tegucigalpa, the capital, a village-like place tilted uphill and downhill, with its national palace constructed like a medieval fortress.

I remember few more thrilling sights than when, after topping the circling mountains above Tegucigalpa, I looked down into the valley which, in the lulls between the warm, moist downpours of tropic rain, was a sea of heaving fireflies, a carpet of flame.

Another long trip took me over the mountains to Comayagua, then up and up the mountain cliff, and down through great interminable forests, looped and looped with huge lianas, great tree monsters in the embrace of serpent-like growth. Just at twilight we crossed the mighty lake of Yojoa, a vast body of water completely surrounded by gigantic mountains and dense forests, and no sign of human habitation. On the upper reaches the vegetation was temperate zone; where we disembarked to the north, it had been transformed into dense jungles.

There remains with me the magic of that long night ride through the fantastic vaults of dense vegetation, the glow of animal eyes, the occasional thatched settlements, the lowing of cattle, the glow of lanterns on bronzed arms thrusting packages and letters up to us. The heat hung about us like a damp sheet in a steam-room, and at five the next morning, when I walked across the floor of my little room in the little hotel of a frontier settlement, the perspiration left wet tracks, as though I were some tropical man Friday.

I wandered through the drifts of sand in Puerto Cortés, stuck on a little spit of land, hemmed around by marsh and jungle and sea, and from there went on by sailboat, lurching along the coast to Puerto Barrios in Guatemala.

In the jungles I visited the ancient ruins of Quiriguá, now on a United Fruit Company plantation, and again reached Guatemala City. I went up to the city of Quetzaltenango, high among the crags, one of the picturesque sights of the Americas, and filled with the buzz of eager Quiché folk in bright costumes, the markets cascading with beautiful textiles and handicrafts; and then returned to Mexico.

I enjoyed myself thoroughly, interviewing presidents, editors, generals, peasants, Indians, thieves, pimps, labor leaders, business men, American adventurers and stranded beach-combers, Amer-

ican consuls and ministers, housewives, hotel-keepers, stablemen, sailors, banana workers, negroes, lumbermen, priests, missionaries, aviators, ex-soldiers of fortune, miners, actresses, poets, plantation owners, muleteers and traveling salesmen.

Many of the details have been described in *Banana Gold*.

On my return, the Chiapas coast in Mexico, though in places lush with dense tropical vegetation, was unusually desolate and dusty. But at Santa Rosa the late sun caught the faded sails of the fishing junks on the lagoons in yellow rays and converted them to golden satin floating on a golden sea. To the passengers, Indian women held up freshly fried fish, sizzling on bright plantain leaves.

And where was it I had cinnamon-flavored chocolate, beaten up in a wooden cup in the prehistoric manner with a carved stick of wooden rings—a *molinillo*—twirled between brown fingers, chocolate beaten and beaten to a creaming froth? In Aztec days it was bad etiquette to drink chocolate without froth on it; each guest was provided with a *molinillo*. Now, the big-bosomed Indian woman who offered me the chocolate asked whether I would have it “with rings” or “without rings.” What is the difference? . . . “Without rings” it costs three centavos; “with rings,” five centavos. . . . “With rings,” I said loftily.

At once, on to each of the fingers of her two hands, she pulled on three or four glistening rings with false jewels. As the beater rotated, it tinkled the rings, until the chocolate was foaming up and over the sides.

I drank the same chocolate I would have drunk “without rings.” But “with rings” I was automatically transformed into a gentleman and aristocrat. Veblen’s “theories of the leisure class” and “ostentatious waste” do not depend on a feudal or

industrial age; they strike deep into the roots of human nature, from primitive times to our own.

I thought of other homely contacts. Often I had tried to buy things on the road from peasants going to market. Rarely would they sell, although they might have to walk a night and a day with a heavy load to get to their destination. Something besides the profit motive was involved in their expeditions. These people were too close to elementary needs, agricultural self-sufficiency and the barter system. Work, production, sale comprised an integral social cycle which provided in itself a creative satisfaction quite apart from any accumulation of worldly wealth. Going to market was not essentially a commercial matter, but part of a functional whole, a sociable necessity for isolated people.

On my early morning walks when I lived in Coyoacán, I always bought two oranges from a woman on the edge of the plaza, who squatted under a triangle of matting and spread her wares neatly on a large board precariously balanced on the end of an apple box. One day—I was giving a party that evening—I offered to buy her whole stock of about four dozen oranges.

She looked at me severely. "Here are your two oranges. I always pick out two of the best ones for you."

"But I want to buy all you have."

She flounced her wide skirts like an angry hen. "You can't. Why, the very idea! What do you think I would do all the rest of the day with no oranges to sell?"

And there was the one-legged beggar near my house. Every morning I dropped five centavos into his battered sombrero. A jovial, if begrimed individual, he always had some clever witticism.

Then for a whole month I was gone in the interior on a horseback trip. When I returned his face beamed with delight. As usual I dropped five centavos into his hat.

He fished it out and haughtily handed it back to me. "You owe me a peso and sixty-five centavos," he declared with solemn conviction.

I paid.

2

On my trip up the Pacific Coast, after leaving Chiapas, two days later in the Tehuantepec hotel, at a table under fig-trees and quinces in the patio, my glance strayed to the most beautiful Tehuana—as the famed native women there are known—I had yet seen, far more beautiful than the lavishly adorned girl who served me pineapple and *mamey* drinks in the market. The girl at the adjacent table wore the typical everyday costume: red blouse with heavy gold embroidery, cut square over the bosom, brown arms bare; the full rose silk skirt ending in a foot and a half of lace over trim ankles; and between blouse and skirt shone the little coquettish strip of belly skin. But this Tehuana did not reveal bare toes and manicured nails; she wore silk stockings and high-heeled shoes. And to my amazement, she spoke perfect English to her companion.

"Some native educated in the States," I thought. "Such things happen."

After lunch, her companion, a heavy-set Mexican with black hair and cherubic white countenance, began sketching.

I recognized his work instantly. He was Miguel Covarrubias, a famous Mexican caricaturist, connected with a prominent magazine, who has recently published a fine book on Bali, a best-seller. I had been supposed to meet him in New York.

Miguel was now drawing a *paterfamilias*, with a swarm of offspring oozing over the sides of a gaudily painted roller coaster, hilariously scooting down into vertiginous space.

"And so, Don Miguel," I said without preliminary, "you are doing Coney Island sketches in the jungles of Tehuantepec!"

He soon recovered from his astonishment and when he learned my name, greeted me enthusiastically.

"My wife, Rosa," he said.

Rosa, I knew, was a well-known American dancer, of Spanish and Irish descent.

That's what sunbaths will do for one, I thought, vaguely disappointed that she was not really the Tehuana I had supposed her to be.

Miguel went on with his sketches. Coney Island pictures in the jungles of Tehuantepec! Summer time in Coney Island! Here it was drowsy, warm spring.

Out through the cool corridor of tiles and red brick, we could see two burros browsing under the gigantic shade trees of the narrow cobbled street, grass-grown and rustic. The whole town was a bower of green—gardens, fruit, semi-tropical vegetation. The little tile- and thatch-roofed houses looked down from the river bluffs upon the lazy silver stream where at this hour girls, unburdened by shame, would be bathing nude, the deep flush of brown earth and sunlight in their bodies. Water-carriers would be filling barrels held by rawhide racks on the backs of burros. The market, with its crisscross of sun and shade, its heaps of golden mangos and fibrous cocoanuts, would be reviving now, with a rustle of lace skirts and the buzzing singsong chatter in the Zapotec tongue.

Life flows easily here. Nature is beneficent. No man goes hungry. Nature gives him a chance. The women—for it is a sort of matriarchate in practice and very masculine in theory—give him a chance. He needs only a few yards of cotton goods to hide his nakedness. But there is no Coney Island.

Here in Tehuantepec, life is still integrated and simple. Despite the jostling of races, despite conquest and counter-conquest and international intrigue for this narrow isthmus between oceans, and the building of Lord Cowdray's famous railroad, life has not grown complicated with specialization. This is

still a semi-rural town of houses among orchards and back-door handicrafts. Here come the sellers of fish from Laguna Grande; here women carve gourds into beautiful colored patterns; they weave and embroider bright textiles on hand-loom; they make painted earthen jars for charcoal fires; and interlace straw mats on which to sleep and be buried in. It was actually a wrench to visualize Coney Island or the blare of Broadway in this place.

How much of rural Mexico is like this! I thought of the many towns, tucked away in remote mountain ranges, I had visited: San Francisco Asompa, with its glistening black pottery, classic in form; Silicoayapan, of the saddle-makers; Cuiquepan, where they make violins and bass viols out of precious woods with only a machete for tool and river sand to dress them down; Paracho of the fiesta masks and the carved chocolate *molinillos*; Teotitlán del Valle of the sarape weavers; Patzcuaro, of the silver jewelry; Olinalá of the fragrant lacquered chests—each place had its specialty.

Don Miguel's sketches suddenly illuminated two ways of life: "Regimentation" was merely a foolish cliché. These people, too, were regimented to certain community habits. But there was a basic difference between their way of life and ours. We Americans divide life into compartments: work, play, religion, home. But in Tehuantepec, religion, play, work, and home-life are closely interwoven, part of an integrated design.

We went to a dance under an open-air ramada of branches. First we were introduced to the Principales from the seven wards and were courteously served *atole*, a sweetened corn-gruel, in this case flavored with chocolate, and sweet-cakes. We were welcomed with formal, courteous speech. We replied in kind, and then made the small customary donation to help cover the expenses of the celebration. The girls, barefoot but weighted down with gold necklaces and earrings, danced in a circular fashion as one must dance on hard dirt, their wide Tehuana

skirts swinging like bells about their small-boned ankles and feet; their lace headdresses, quivering with every motion, quivering to the passion aroused by secret touch of hand and smile and flaming glance. The late sun fell through the branches in golden shafts, glistening on brown skins and shiny black hair, touching silk folds with the delicate warmth of a Fra Angelico painting. The shafts of sunlight took the place of golden trumpets.

This dance was part of the corn-festival, part of the religious celebrations that a good and abundant crop might be harvested. It was not "play" in the American sense, not even in sociological terminology; rather, it was a glad duty, a placation to the gods, a complement of daily toil and the good life. It was David dancing before the Lord. It is a type of creative power and magic at the command of the individual and the group which the industrial age has, for better or worse, destroyed.

We have found other compensations, though perhaps there is a void we have never filled. Compared to life in rural American towns in the South and Mid-West, the world of Tehuantepec is rich indeed. But our gods of modern comfort are jealous gods. We cannot have our cake and eat it too, any more than can those of Tehuantepec. But though one of Tehuantepec's joys is not struggling with New York subway turnstiles and although a Chicago white-collar bank-clerk might sniff and be unhappy, life in Tehuantepec and similar places in Mexico has its reason and its compensations.

3

January 5, 1928, a year after this initial trip to central America, I unexpectedly received the following telegram from Oswald Garrison Villard, the editor of the *Nation*:

CAN YOU PROCEED IMMEDIATELY NICARAGUA FOR NATION
SENDING EXCLUSIVE STORIES AMERICAN POLICY MARINE RULE
POPULAR FEELING ETCETERA . . . TRIP PROBABLY OCCUPY MONTH.
CAN OFFER — A WEEK AND EXPENSES. WIRE COLLECT WHETHER
POSSIBLE. URGENTLY HOPE YOU CAN GO.

I thought the matter over and consulted with several persons
and organizations in touch with Sandino. If I could reach Sandino,
the Nicaraguan rebel fighting marine occupation out in
the mountains and jungles of the country, the trip would be
worth while. That same day I wired back:

WILL GLADLY GO LEAVING HERE SATURDAY VIA GUATEMALA.
GATES TO SANDINO OPEN BUT UNADVISABLE ANNOUNCE THIS PARTICULAR
FACT BEFOREHAND FOR IT WOULD INCREASE RISK SPOIL
CHANCES. ESTIMATE AT LEAST FIVE WEEKS NECESSARY. WIRE ME
— DOLLARS TOMORROW.

January 6 I received the following reply from Freda Kirchwey,
managing editor:

MONEY SENT THROUGH BANK OF MONTREAL TODAY. FEAR ANY
ANNOUNCEMENT YOUR TRIP MAY CAUSE AMERICAN LIMITATION
YOUR ACTIVITY INVITE CENSORSHIP. CABLE SUCCESS YOU HAVE
ESPECIALLY SANDINO.

The details of this trip retracing my route of the year previous
as far as Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and then taking to horses,
dodging the frontier patrol in Honduras and crossing through
the mountains and jungles with Sandino forces, then under
bombardment by the marines, are also told in *Banana Gold*.
From Sandino's camp in San Rafael del Norte, I made my way
secretly through the American lines and got down to Managua,
the capital of Nicaragua.

In my files I find the following letter, written to Freda Kirchwey
January 10, 1928, from Ayutla, Guatemala:

This morning I crossed the frontier and will arrive at the capital tomorrow. I shall be obliged to remain there one day to make some further connections, and then shall go by auto over the mountains to Salvador. . . . Sandino has a *junta* in the capital of Salvador, with which I will have to make contact. From there I shall cross the Gulf of Fonseca and shall either get horses in San Lorenzo, Honduras, or in Tegucigalpa, according to the route over which the *junta* may send me. . . . This is the only practical way in which I can have any real assurance of reaching my destination. . . .

Everybody available in Mexico helped me royally. (Dr. Carlos León, Dr. Zepeda, and several Nicaraguan refugees.) I got on the job immediately on receipt of your telegram and saw most of the essential people that night between the hours of eight and one. I would have gained a day if you had wired the money through the cable office instead of through a bank, but fortunately this enabled me to see Zepeda, Sacasa's representative in Mexico, who helped me considerably.

The next letter I find to the *Nation* is dated January 14 from San Salvador:

This morning finds me in San Salvador after a night in Santa Ana and a long ride beginning at 3 A.M. over the mountains from Guatemala—a sweltering hot ride for the most part, through village after village of thatched roofs; and uneventful save that every so often a soldier comes up and very politely asks your name and destination.

Both in Guatemala and Salvador at every stop it means endless and irritating visits to the police, the customs, the various governmental offices, the Comandancia, and everywhere a little fee. It is surprising to me that the people have enough energy left to start revolts.

In Salvador an air of suspicion of everybody and everything holds, due to the attempted *cuartelazo* last month; every entrance to every Government building bristles with soldiers clad in blue material out of which we are accustomed to make overalls.

I wish I had time to interview Mr. W. W. Renwick, who keeps

the Salvadorian finances in order; but I am hoping to get on to La Unión and thence to Honduras tomorrow morning; I hope to get to Tegucigalpa on Monday and get started with horses and a guide, if our rebellious friend [Sandino] is still on the map, and I rather think he will be.

Unfortunately there was a boat from La Unión to Amapala only twice a week. I had to wait to connect up with a courier from Sandino's camp, and so could not leave Salvador until Tuesday, all the time chaffing with the delay, and so wrote the *Nation* on January 16, putting off my arrival in Tegucigalpa until Thursday.

January 20, 1928, I wired the *Nation* from Tegucigalpa, Honduras:

IGNORE TELEGRAM EXSALVADOR PENDING WRITTEN INSTRUCTIONS. OFFICIAL HINDERANCE. MY GUIDE ARRESTED BUT EVERY HOPE SUCCESS.

February 3, after two weeks in the saddle, struggling through jungle, rain and mud, riding day and night, I was in Sandino's camp in San Rafael del Norte, Nicaragua, bombing planes droning menacingly overhead. But it was long after that I received an answer to my communications. They then had a faint reminiscent sound, like the rumor of an earthquake brought excitedly to one who was actually in the midst of falling bricks:

Your two notes and your cable have succeeded in giving us a feeling of suspense and vast curiosity about your movements. The cable mentioned an earlier cable which never came; nor can we trace it from this end. However, since it was to be "disregarded" we need not be unduly worried. I hope it did not fall into unfriendly hands.

Calculating your movements from this end is a fruitless enterprise. We can only wait for news. Therefore this letter is only a word of greeting to welcome you out—when you come out.

We here realize that your determination to go in by the back door was a courageous and dangerous one. You may imagine with what eagerness we are waiting for word of your safety and success.

Three days after this note was written by Freda, I was actually cabling the *Nation* of the success of my enterprise.

TWO WEEKS HORSEBACK FROM TEGUCIGALPA CAPITAL HONDURAS
HALF ACROSS NICARAGUA WITH SANDINO TROOPS. FIRST AND ONLY
AMERICAN EVER SECURING INTERVIEW. GREAT STORY. ANNOUNCE-
MENT IN ORDER.

How tame that now sounds! Next to my earlier penniless wanderings across Mexico described briefly in the first chapter of this book, it was perhaps the most arduous trip I ever took. No one but myself will ever appreciate the suspense of being seized and searched in La Unión by a gang of police and other officials; how I saved my letters to Sandino by a ruse; how in Amapala, the guide who was to take me to Sandino was arrested by the Honduran authorities and later sent over to the marines in Nicaragua where he was tortured into confessing that he was taking me there; how the Honduran authorities, pricked on by the American Minister, tried to intercept me in Tegucigalpa and later at the frontier—quite too late for success. How we dodged the frontier patrols and plunged into a country torn with war; how that first night we could hear the cannonading thirty miles or so away. Then the long journey through the jungles and the mountains, days and nights of endless rain; one stretch of twenty-three hours in the saddle; nights when we slept with the rain slopping in our faces, and scarcely any night when we had more than a few hours' sleep. South and south and south, as Sandino, having abandoned the fortress-like mountain of Chipote, moved into the very heart of the country—at the time the American press said he had been routed and had fled to Honduras.

There is no need to repeat the old story of that here, or how I got through the lines to Managua.

February 6 I received a cable from the *Nation*:

STAFF THRILLED DELIGHTED SUCCESS YOUR GREAT ADVENTURE.
EAGERLY AWAITING STORIES. PLEASE CABLE PROBABLE TITLES
NUMBER MAILING DATE OF FIRST.

I cabled back, received a request for ten articles and wrote: "I only hope that now the articles all get through O.K. The last was mailed today. I have feared interruption of a sort you can imagine, and I have labored day and night on them. I think the whole story ought to shake something loose up there—just what I don't know."

The rest of my letter is devoted to a detailed account of efforts of the Military Intelligence Department to brow-beat me, and the interview I had on that score with Lieutenant Larsen.

Tomorrow I shall probably go over and tell them that I have seen Sandino. If I land in jail, pray for me.

I enclose several sheets signed by Admiral Sellers and addressed to Sandino, who were dropped by airplane behind the lines.

I asked Sandino if he had replied. He said no and immediately . . . dictated a letter, which he asked me to present to Admiral Sellers. He also gave me several telegrams to the Pan-American Congress and the United States Senate. I am quite aware that my presenting the letter to Mr. Sellers or sending the telegrams would open me to violation of Code X_{4,632,712} (The Logan Act) which keeps all good citizens in their places, so they shall have to be presented, if you see fit, through the columns of the *Nation*, which perhaps sees them ultimately to their destination but allows me to confine myself to my proper professional duties.

In *Banana Gold* I described my amusing contacts with officialdom, the President Adolfo Díaz, Chamorro, General McCoy in charge of the elections, Minister Eberhardt of the American

Legation, his assistant, Dana Munro, General Feland, in charge of marine operations.

Though my articles had been mailed, urgency of publication necessitated that the first three or four should be also cabled. In the first ones I kept to innocuous travel and adventurous stuff, which made Freda very impatient in New York, but I knew that any real information would never get out over the wires. To cable the others, I would have to get out of Nicaragua posthaste. But thanks to American State department pressure, it was impossible to wire any news of Sandino of any importance out of any Central-American country except Costa Rica, a sad commentary on the utter sycophancy of the governments of the other countries.

I missed the boat on the Pacific side, and to avoid a long wait, went down the San Juan River, the future canal route, to Greytown, got stuck there because of bad weather that prevented any boats from getting across the dangerous bar, finally got up the coast in a small cruiser. On it was a man peeling from smallpox. From Bluefields I got passage on a little boat cluttered to the gunwales with cocoanuts from the Little Corn Islands, to Puerto Limón in Costa Rica, where I got out another article by wireless.

After numerous adventures, some of them quite risky, I got back to Mexico.

4

There was a curious aftermath of my interview with General Feland. Apparently at the time I saw him in Managua, he was utterly phlegmatic and utterly hostile to my plans and efforts. Later I discovered he was a man with liberal convictions he dared not express.

He subsequently wrote me from San Francisco with regard to securing the remains of certain American aviators who had crashed. Though this put me in an embarrassing position, I

took it up with Dr. Zepeda. I forget what Zepeda's terms were for the delivery of these things, but not only was I again running danger in the violation of the Logan Act, but it would have entailed considerable expense which I personally could not meet. At various times thereafter Feland wrote me, asking me for information of one sort or another. His letters were always unusually cordial and decent. Once he asked me for information about the death of several pilots for whom he wished to get a citation for bravery.

I was not at all interested in having marines, however brave—and of that there was no doubt in this instance—being decorated for waging war on a more or less defenseless people and a weaker nation. However, I sent him what information I had picked up from Sandino's followers and repeated from memory my conversation with Sandino regarding the two men. Sandino himself had exclaimed with admiration the manner in which they had defended themselves to the very last. How sad that such courage could not have been expended in a more worthy cause!

For many years I did not again hear from Feland. Then, in 1933, when I went to Columbus, Ohio, to speak for the Foreign Policy Association, hardly had I gone to my rooms in the Athletic Club when I was called from downstairs.

"General Feland is downstairs to see you."

He had retired from the service and was living in Columbus, his old home.

He seemed more alert and in better health than when carrying on his duties in the Nicaraguan sun.

"A lot of water has run under the bridge since we were in Nicaragua five years ago," he remarked.

"Yes, the marines are out, now," I answered.

He looked at me with a quizzical smile. "And a good thing. They had no business being sent there."

I expressed surprise that he should make such a statement.

"I don't know what you wrote about me in your book—"

"Nothing very complimentary," I replied.

"I don't blame you. I was doing my duty as an officer, but I really had no stomach for it. You were right all the time. We were in the wrong. I couldn't show my feelings to you then, but I was with *you*."

"I'm glad President Roosevelt is not intervening in Cuba," he continued. "We've done enough of that sort of thing. We should stay out entirely. Armed intervention doesn't solve anything. Let those people fight out their difficulties and get them over with."

"But American property and lives . . ." I put in facetiously.

"Blah!" he exploded. "They are rarely in danger. When I got to Nicaragua, the American plantation owners around Matagalpa began shouting for marines. I rushed some up there. They were never in the slightest danger. When Sandino troops descended on some of them later, they were treated better than by the government we had installed and were defending by force. They lost a few mules, that was natural; but the regular soldiers took mules, too. Those Americans were always bleating for protection they didn't need."

"But these Cubans are locking up American mine managers and holding them without food." It was a bit of fun to argue on *his* old side.

"Nonsense," replied Feland. "The chances are that the mine and plantation managers in Cuba locked themselves up in order to bring about intervention. Those Cuban peasants have a right to go on strike. What if they do lock up a few people for a few days and give them a taste of what they have been doing to those poor devils all these years? I am not in favor of using the American marines to further the interests of a few people at the expense of a whole nation. Americans who go abroad

should not expect any more privileged position or any more safety than the rest of the population among whom they find themselves. Usually their lives and properties are merely endangered by armed intervention."

"I believe the record says that before we intervened in Nicaragua, no American had ever lost his life or so much property."

"That is true. Afterwards many did."

RUSSIAN RIFLES

AMONG THE WAR MATERIALS our government authorized to be rushed down to the Obregón government during the De la Huerta revolt as a reward for the signing of the Bucareli agreements covering petroleum and other concessions and the setting up of a claims commission, were Russian model rifles and ammunition. Later I was to see Russian rifles in the hands of Sandino soldiers fighting American marines.

Any Hearst correspondent knowing of them would have at once reported, "Bolshevik Gold!" The exclamation should have been, "American dollars!" They were there because of our State Department's great ingenuity. *We provided many of the rifles that helped kill American marines.*

The State Department helped Obregón put down De la Huerta. But with Obregón's successor in the Presidency, Plutarco Elías Calles, new difficulties soon developed between the two countries as a result of the setting aside of the Bucareli agreements, difficulties which led almost to a break in relations. Calles at once tried to offset American influence in Latin America. He had, I suppose, just as much right to meddle there as has the United States. The Mexican legation in Guatemala was raised to the rank of an embassy, much to the social discomfort of American Minister Geissler, who remained merely a minister. Mexican propaganda was spread about. Newspapers were subsidized. Theater troupes were sent south. Gifts of radio stations, Pasteur institutes and airplanes were made by

Mexico. Loans were tendered. Olympic games were set up. A special news bureau was established.

I wrote about this Mexican penetration in an article published in *Current History*, on which the editor, Mr. Ochs Oakes, put the formidable title: MEXICO MARCHES ON THE CANAL.

It raised hell all around the lot, and failed to please the Central-American governments, Mexico or our State Department. Newspapers in Central America reprinting it were suppressed.

President Coolidge actually sent a private secretary down to Guatemala to bawl out Geissler for certain information he had inadvertently given me. A friend of mine, in the Legation at the time, told me that this special emissary, a tall, lank New Englander, appeared suddenly in the doorway with two suitcases. Dropping them on either side of him, he launched into an immediate tongue-lashing.

From Geissler's side, I suspect I suffered petty annoyances. A lawyer from Oklahoma, Geissler's state, who had been to Guatemala, began writing to editors whenever an article of mine appeared, attempting to throw doubt on my veracity. Naturally the editors would send these letters on to me with a query. As soon as I explained why he was so interested in my literary career, the editors would usually drop his letters into the waste-basket.

One day I sat down and wrote him as nearly as I can recall:

DEAR SIR:

Once upon a time there was an eel-like servitor of King Tutankhamen, who, dressed in rigorous etiquette in a silk top hat, morning coat without any pants, went about for his master with a sledge hammer breaking other people's peanuts.

In reply he wrote me a very aggrieved pompous letter, but after that let me alone religiously.

My *Current History* article had the result that two years

later, after my Sandino trip, when I wished to cross Guatemala from the Pacific Coast port of San José to Mexico, I was barred from the country, and only after spending nearly fifty dollars in radio tolls was I able to get permission for forty-eight hours in which to cross the country. Among those most arduous in helping me do this was my old friend, Minister Geissler. He was far more active than was required by his position, and I have always been deeply grateful for his assistance, when in reality his feelings toward me must have been far from kindly.

More than a year after this article, when I dropped into the Mexican Embassy in Washington, Ambasadord Tellez put out his two hands, gritted his teeth and made a motion of shaking me bodily.

"That article of yours cost me more trouble than the whole damn' petroleum question put together." He explained some of his difficulties with the State Department as a result of it. But he was too personally fond of me to be really angered, told me I had stuck to the truth, and sent me off with the usual bottle of cognac.

My article apparently gave the State Department an idea. Through a subordinate Kellogg tried to persuade the press to issue propaganda to the effect that Mexico was spreading Bolshevism in Central America and thus endangering the canal. The Associated Press was the only news agency unprofessional enough to handle this canard.

My thesis had been that Mexico had just as much right to mess into the internal affairs of Central America as we had—which was no ethical right at all—but that she said it with flowers and we with bullets.

However, Mexico did not restrict her activities southward to merely cultural Pan-Mexicanism, but took a hand politically and militarily. In Nicaragua, Calles recognized the Liberal gov-

ernment which Sacasa, legal Vice-President driven out by the armed coup of Chamorro, had set up in the far northern Gulf port of Puerto Cabezas, while we backed the Conservatives, then our traditional rôle, and put in President Adolfo Díaz by means of a battleship conference and a fake appointment by a rump Congress, all in the name of the constitution and legality.

Shortly after, four shiploads of munitions were sent south from Mexico, two on the Pacific, two on the Atlantic sides, to aid Sacasa. Naturally it would be difficult to charge the Mexican government with officially shipping these things out. The shipments were secretly made by several cabinet ministers, who naturally acted through trusted private agents, so the origin of the materials could not be readily traced and official denials could always be tendered, just as Germany and Italy do today in the case of Spain.

But the Russian model rifles had only one source, the American government to the Mexican government, which under no circumstances would let army rifles get out into private hands without a reason.

And so to help the Sacasa government—rebels in the eyes of Washington and of our puppet government of Adolfo Díaz—four shiploads of arms and ammunition went south. At least two of these shipments got through without being intercepted. One boat was called *Con-Con*, and the Sandino soldiers called their rifles "*Con-Cons*." I copied down one Sandino song which mentions the number of marines killed by "my faithful '*Con-Con*.' "

When Sandino came to Sacasa in Puerto Cabezas to ask for arms to raise revolt in the Segovias, the Liberal chieftain gave him precisely these rifles, especially as he feared what shortly happened, that our marines would be landed from the American battleships in harbor to disarm his forces and upset his government. Later, Sandino refused to accept General Moncada's

Tipitapa agreement with Stimson, the agreement being a cheap betrayal of Sacasa and the Liberal cause—and carried on his own war in the Segovias, using the rifles we had indirectly provided him to kill American marines.

This is the eternal story of allowing munitions to be shipped abroad for profiteering or purposes of meddling in neighbors' affairs—sooner or later the bullets of patriotic profiteers may come home to American hearts. Today England is placing orders for armored planes in the United States. Russia, Japan and Germany have done the same. Ultimately those planes, which American genius and labor supplied, may quite conceivably be showering bombs on American battleships, American sailors, American cities and American women and children. Such munitions have already killed and wounded Americans in China; they have destroyed American property in Spain. We permit the sale of munitions to do these things, then send diplomatic notes protesting them.

We have sold such supplies to Japan without a quiver of an eyelash to aid it in seizing Manchukuo and attack China in violation of treaties with us and against which aggressions diplomatically we have protested repeatedly and are still protesting. We sold supplies to Italy to help her conquer Ethiopia. Our so-called embargo then was a publicity farce.

It seems that our State Department can get alarmed only when such purchases are made by a people's government desperately fighting for democracy and against tyranny as today in Spain. We cut off all supplies to that government, but continue supplying Italy and Germany who are attacking it. We protested to Mexico regarding the transshipment of American supplies to that government—the Loyalists—and Mexico heeded our protests; but we never protested to Canada or Panama and several other countries which have been transshipping American supplies to Franco to destroy that government. With re-

spect to Spain, we have proved ourselves a precious bunch of treacherous hypocrites.

Today we have largely cut off supplies to China but not to the aggressor nation, Japan. We merely make noble speeches, as that of Roosevelt at Chicago, denouncing aggression. In questions of international policy, with respect to the munitions industry, the Roosevelt administration, except for fine words, has definitely promoted principles of evil abroad, evil which will eventually cost us much blood and tears.

I write this at a moment when I have just finished reading the first volumes of the Nye Senate investigation of the international munitions industry. It is a sordid story. While the United States has been busy holding disarmament conferences; while we were talking peace and making the nations sign empty peace pacts; while we were attempting to conciliate the various Latin-American nations, our government has been busy acting as salesmen for the American munitions interests. Our Navy and War departments send technical missions abroad to advise foreign governments and these work in close conjunction with American munition makers to dispose of deadly weapons which help bring on wars that our government outwardly and diplomatically attempts to avert; or they cause revolutions which American marines, in the past and probably in the future, have been sent in to control; then the marines, as in the case of Nicaragua, are killed by bullets made in American factories. Mr. Hull in his recent deal to give Brazil American battleships was merely acting in the rôle of a super-commercial munitions salesman. Because Brazil was buying American munitions and gunboats, it was to be rewarded by our government by getting free American vessels paid for by American taxpayers.

Admirals, generals and others have served on the boards of munitions companies; some such have been sent as members of American peace and disarmament missions abroad. So long

as such things are allowed to go on, the propaganda of our good pacifists is of about as much use as the bleating of sheep in a runaway toward a dip in the blood-bath of war.

3

How did it happen we were trafficking in Russian rifles? When the Miliukof and Lov governments fell in Russia and Kerensky came in, a desperate effort was made to keep him and his country in the war on the side of the Allies. A generous loan was extended to him by Santa Claus United States, the proceeds to go for war materials to be bought in this country. A vast quantity of Russian model rifles were hurriedly manufactured, but before many could be shipped abroad the October revolution had occurred in Russia; the Bolsheviki had come into power.

Subsequently various efforts were made to get rid of these guns. A Costa Rican cabinet official told me that on one occasion, Bryan had tried to induce his country to buy them. One of the munitions rackets in Latin America is to palm off on those countries the outworn or outmoded munitions, boats, submarines and whatnot which no longer serve for the larger powers. These are bought up at a song, then deals are made to the south, and thanks to the grafting of Latin-American officials, as much is paid for such junk as would be paid for first-class materials, and everybody reaps a handsome reward; here it is known as profit; down there it becomes graft. But in the deal proposed to Costa Rica, that little country would actually get unused materials, though of no use to us and unsalable anywhere in the world except in Russia and no longer salable there. The Russian rifles and munitions were to be passed on to a special private company, and Costa Rica would then pay the customary outrageous price, a quite unnecessary private-profit venture adding about a million dollars. Whether

Bryan had any personal interest, as the Costa Rican official insisted, in the proposed private intermediary company, I do not know. However, Costa Rica prides itself on having more schoolteachers than soldiers and could see no reason why it should strain its budget to load up with unneeded rifles of a model not desired, even in the name of conserving American friendship.

And so, eventually, to further American interventionist tactics in Mexico and to sustain a government which had given in to the American oil interests, the rifles were sent there. We furthered American interventionist tactics in Mexico and ironically provided arms to obstruct our own policy in Nicaragua.

THE END OF MORROW

SOON AFTER MY RETURN FROM Nicaragua to Mexico City, Ambassador Morrow sent word he would like to see me to gather impressions of what was going on down there. I was unprepared for the harsh onslaught I faced.

"Could this Sandino run the country if he were victorious?" demanded Morrow sharply.

"Who knows?"

"If he can't then he has no right to push over the apple-cart."

"Could you run the United States if you became President?" I asked. "Who knows for sure what any man can do in an untried situation? Or what hidden capacities may be called forth? Thus far Sandino has met every situation capably, even if not to your liking. He has carried on a campaign against great odds, has kept the loyalty of his followers during the worst adversity, has met problems which would have broken the hearts of lesser men. Even so, your strictures become meaningless, for Sandino has expressly stated that he wishes merely to get the marines out, that he has no political ambitions, that he will never accept a public post, that he is not fighting for personal ambition. I consider him a great patriot."

"He has no right whatsoever to assume his present leadership unless he is willing to continue it if he is successful," declared Morrow arbitrarily.

"I doubt if any such iron-clad rules can be laid down for

political or human conduct," I replied. "Even if he is or is not capable of governing Nicaragua himself, he—just as anyone else—has a perfect right to kick over the apple-cart if he thinks the apples are poisoned. Nor do I believe we have any right, except that of brute force, however much we may gild the lily, to send our marines into Nicaragua."

"They are there as a result of a certain situation and policy," retorted Morrow. "I agree with you that it would be preferable, though this might not make our purposes any more holy, to work out a system where armed intervention in Latin America would not be carried on solely by us but in conjunction with other Latin-American countries." He smiled ironically.

This was about all Morrow permitted me to say about Nicaragua. He did not ask me what I had seen there, what my impressions were, but for more than an hour, without permitting me to get in a word edgewise, proceeded to lecture me severely on Nicaraguan affairs and to take me to task for my articles. It was only through great self-restraint that I did not get up and walk out.

He had never been there himself, but now he proceeded to give me a stuffed-shirt State Department harangue about the sacredness of the dirty Tipitapa agreements, by which Stimson had persuaded Moncada to sell Sacasa and Sandino down the river, and the necessity of ruthlessly stamping out everything that obstructed those agreements. It was the dull speech of a typical unimaginative American imperialist.

Of course, Morrow had just permitted himself to be used as part of the window-dressing of the Pan-American Congress celebrated in Havana in the capital of Machado, who was happily doing American bidding and slaughtering his people in the effort in the most approved torture methods of a Balkan dictatorship.

That Conference was a childish spectacle where Coolidge,

Hughes and Morrow made strenuous efforts to allay Latin-American distrust being occasioned by armed intervention in Haiti and Nicaragua. All the glowing speeches of friendship bubbled up into a steaming barrage to lay down a screen to hide the real facts of intercontinental relationships. The Congress was celebrated at the very moment of the worst battles between the marines and Sandino.

Morrow had also arranged Lindbergh's good-will flight to Mexico, a worthy undertaking and a big success; but then, advised by Morrow, the flyer had gone on south over Central America and had arrived in Cuba in time to add his prestige to the improper doings of this particular Pan-American Congress. He thus permitted himself to be used as an ordinary cat's-paw for the effort to subjugate Latin America by overt aggression. Morrow was part and parcel of the effort to show that our purposes in Latin America were nobler than they seemed.

One of the things I cherish was a cartoon by Van Loon made at the time in which he depicted Lindbergh flying high in the clouds over Nicaragua—that was one country he did not need to stop in—and myself underneath on a mule actually seeing the land and the people.

And yet one could not help being fond of Morrow. After I left, following the bad-tasting discussion or rather monologue about Nicaragua, in the outer corridors of the Embassy I heard footsteps pattering behind me. Around a corner came the little man, slightly breathless.

"Mr. Beals! Mr. Beals!" he called. "I thought you would be interested to hear about it. — (he named a prominent aviator) has just reached Hawaii safely. The Associated Press just phoned me the news."

His face was all aglow.

2

Another anecdote about Morrow is worth telling. One day to his Cuernavaca residence came the priest of a little church and begged him to help to paint the church, which had remained undecorated since the revolution. Morrow told him to go ahead and paint it.

Perhaps sensing that this might be construed as favoritism to one side at a time when he was trying to settle a serious controversy, Morrow decided to give something to the government. He couldn't offer to paint the local government palace, built in the days of Cortés, which certainly needed a coat of paint, but he could offer a commission to a prominent Mexican artist to decorate its walls. After inquiries, he discovered that Mexico's leading artist was Diego Rivera, an out-and-out Communist. Rivera was invited to the Embassy several times, had tea there, did not seem to be carrying any bombs in his pocket, and was given a \$12,000 contract to decorate the old palace of Cortés.

Rivera is a famous anti-clerical, and as his frescos dealt with the historical records of the Conquest and independence, he painted in potbellied brutal priests, lashing the Indians and gathering worldly lucre.

Morrow, now alarmed that he would be responsible for abetting rather than diminishing the Church struggle, appeared at the Palace one day to talk to Diego, who was perched high up on a scaffolding, hard at work.

Morrow praised the work, then said, "Don Diego, those are pretty mean-looking priests."

"Mm," grumbled Diego, without laying down his brush or turning around.

"Don't you think you could paint a nice-looking priest for a change?"

"Mmm," growled Diego.

But Morrow persisted. "Haven't you ever seen one?"

"Nope," grumbled Diego. "Never."

"Haven't you ever heard of one?"

"Never," growled Diego.

Morrow gave it up and went away.

The next day Diego appeared at the Davis house and said excitedly to Morrow, "I've just read of one."

As a result of this sudden illumination Diego changed his plans, and in one of the doorway panels he painted a picture of the famous Bartolomé de las Casas, who spent his life laboring in behalf of the Indians and protecting them from feudal abuses. But opposite this, Diego put the hell-fires of the Inquisition.

I also retain a picture of Morrow at the famous session of Congress when President Calles, following the assassination of President-elect Obregón, when revolution seemed about to burst forth, called in all the generals of the country, and with them behind him, Congress before him, gave his great speech to the effect that militarism was dead in the country and that the rule of civilians was at hand. It was a tense moment. Calles himself was not at ease. Many of those before and behind him were his deadly enemies. Unbeknown to them or the audience, machine-guns were ready, secreted in the upper part of the dome. It was a memorable address, and Calles for the moment at least won his audience which surged to its feet in a mighty roar of applause. And up in the diplomatic box, little Morrow, forgetting diplomatic niceties, leapt up and clapped his hands furiously.

Also, I remember my friend Aurelio Manrique, the one discordant note on that occasion, shouting above the turmoil, "*Farsante, farsante*," at Calles. And then, as the assemblage fell into a hush, as Calles advanced up the aisle to leave, into his very face Manrique again shouted, "*Farsante! Farsante!*"

The blood left Calles' countenance. For half a second, his step faltered, then he moved on, looking neither to right nor left, and was whirled away through the tall ranks of the black and tan presidential guards, tall, smart fellows, those same Yaquis who eight years before had come into Mexico City behind Obregón, with their queer shuffle, their straw beribboned hats, their one-thonged *guaraches*, their queer tomtoms.

No one had better reason to be glad that Obregón was dead than did Morrow. For Obregón had been elected squarely on a peasant and land program, the very program Morrow had succeeded in destroying. He must indeed have been glad that Calles now was the lone dictator of the country. For Calles had done everything he wanted.

3

If Morrow accomplished many things in Mexico, toward the end he failed. Before he left, the personal relations he had so carefully built up were in ruins. He finally found difficulty in seeing anybody in the government. Certain ministers flatly refused to receive him. This bitter note, which so marred his previous achievements, was never disclosed to the American public. Such things rarely are.

Morrow had gone off to the London disarmament conference, which accomplished nothing. Soon he announced his intention to run for Senator from New Jersey. Mexico, it could be seen, had been a steppingstone for broader political ambitions.

Among those who campaigned for him in New Jersey was "Sandy" McNab, whom Morrow had brought to Mexico as military attaché. McNab, wishing to tout Morrow's prowess, stated that Morrow ran all the finances of Mexico; that Minister of Finance, Montes de Oca, took all his orders from the American Ambassador. Good stuff for the Jersey voters, who

could not be expected to have any opinion that Mexico was a sovereign country.

But when the speech was picked up by a maverick sheet in Mexico and from that spread in headlines in the larger dailies, it created consternation. Undoubtedly Montes de Oca, close to Morrow, had gladly accepted many of his suggestions, based on wide experience, but now his *amour-propre* was stung; politically he was on the spot. He could hardly retain his position as cabinet minister unless he wiped out such a stigma. He had to challenge McNab's statements and soon showed a great deal of spleen against Morrow, whom he must have felt authorized his subordinate's utterances.

Montes de Oca's course was not intelligent. What he now did in anger gave even greater appearance of his being quite under Morrow's thumb. But he knew Morrow was against any precipitate debt settlement solely with the House of Morgan. Such a settlement would look very bad, particularly at this moment, for Morrow. And so, though all Morrow's efforts tended toward eventual debt payment, now Montes de Oca jumped over the traces and began direct negotiations with Lamont for a new immediate settlement.

Morrow got wind of this in London, and as Montes de Oca was planning to come north to seal a new bargain with the bankers, Morrow hoped to meet him in New York and dissuade him. But Montes de Oca avoided the meeting by holding up his own departure until Morrow, who could not longer delay in getting back to Mexico, was on his way south. Then Montes de Oca rushed north and into an ill-advised agreement with Lamont.

Morrow was stricken by this. Not only did it violate all his plans for Mexico, but it gave his whole activity there the complexion of a Machiavellian maneuver to pull the House of Morgan chestnuts out of the fire. Morrow actually fell ill for

about a week. He upbraided Lamont hotly, but when he tried later to force an issue with Montes de Oca, the latter refused even to see him.

I saw Morrow about this time in the Embassy study. We talked an hour, then he canceled a supper-engagement and talked another hour. For two hours he paced the carpet in front of the fireplace, nervously lighting one cigarette after another and violently throwing each away after a puff or two. He told me—and I have no reason to doubt his word—how he had been double-crossed by both the House of Morgan and by Montes de Oca. He was bitter about it.

I begged him to let me break the story. I argued that it would redound to his credit; that his amicable relations with Mexican officialdom were smashed anyway; that he was leaving permanently in a week or so; that he should have the record clear.

"I had thought of denouncing the new agreement publicly," he replied, "but it would precipitate many unpleasant arguments and counter-arguments, and might destroy the broader relations of amity which now, in spite of this, exist between the two governments."

But it was well he went on to New Jersey. He was done in Mexico.

Later, in the company of Alex Gumberg, I attended Morrow's first big campaign meeting in New Jersey. He gave a scholarly, but, except for his attitude on prohibition, a super-conservative talk. He was for repeal and his utterances on that theme in that wet corner of the country were greeted with joyous raucousness. In fact the public, always led around by the nose on minor issues, was not in the least interested in anything he had to say on really important matters. And so, as the campaign progressed, anti-prohibition became more and more his line. He was not, though, in any sense a rabble-rouser. He was a clear, calm speaker, at times fairly forceful. Perhaps his discovery that

the voters were not really interested in any vital issues led him to his openly reactionary stand when he finally took his Senate seat.

Everyone expected that in his campaign and in the Senate, Morrow would gravitate to the band of recalcitrant Republicans fighting Hoover's domination of the party. When in Mexico, Morrow had told me he was much opposed to Hoover's nomination in 1928. He foresaw Hoover's tactlessness and inability to work with others. He feared Hoover's policies would be erratic, constantly twisted by personal spleen toward individuals who did not lock-step with him. Morrow also felt that Hoover was connected with the wrong people on Wall Street, not the solid captains of finance in whom Morrow instinctively had every confidence.

Likewise Morrow had already visioned the efficacy of what became Franklin Roosevelt's good-will policy as a much better means of getting what we wanted out of Latin America than the use of the big stick. He feared Hoover would be more arbitrary than his predecessors in his dealings with that part of the world, and that he would tangle up things in Europe. There was, of course, the difference of views on prohibition. Morrow clearly had a deep personal dislike for Hoover.

But when Hoover won the nomination, Morrow hastened to support his candidacy. Hoover, well aware of Morrow's distrust, looked forward, however, to the latter's opposition in the Senate.

But Morrow, over and beyond personalities, was a loyal Republican. To oppose Hoover, he felt, was to weaken the party. Morrow believed that the growing attacks upon Hoover from within the party were bound to jeopardize future Republican success, and Morrow undoubtedly had his eye cocked on the Presidency for himself. It was clear, though, that in 1932, Hoover, despite unpopularity, could not be set aside. Morrow's

chances, therefore, lay in getting the nomination in 1936. His chances of then being elected would be stronger if Hoover's administration—no one dreamed of Democratic victory then—would be touted as a great success.

And so, in his opening campaign speech, his key address in a sense, Morrow came out boldly in full support of Hoover. He laid the depression, not at the doors of the Republican party, nor upon God, as most able statesmen did, but upon the War. The backwash of that deplorable struggle had at last reached America to endanger our prosperity.

Not only did Morrow set out to defend Hoover, he set out to please the old-line party bosses. He was playing the game to be sure of getting machine support.

In so doing, he laid aside his own individuality and all claim to liberalism. By the time he reached the Senate, he was only a dull standpatter, who jumped through every loop at the crack of the party whip. He excused this on the grounds he was a newcomer who needed first to learn all the ropes. He ached to take more open action, and on question after question, used to compose speeches in the most careful manner and deliver them before a mirror in his hotel suite, but never delivered one before the Senate. Nor did he ever make a single motion of importance there, and he voted the reactionary way in everything. Whatever faint coloring of humanitarianism Morrow may have had was apparently not even skin-deep, but had been fabricated by such advisers as George Rublee who were then no longer at hand.

He died before his real measure could be taken by the country. Undoubtedly, had he lived, he would have walked away with the Republican nomination, for he was at an astronomical distance above Landon in ability, intelligence, knowledge and understanding. Posing as a liberal, he might have given Roosevelt a real run for his money. Certainly no one of his stature

exists today in the Republican line-up. But that he would have done more than have represented the great financial monopolists of the country in a super-intelligent fashion seems doubtful.

As for Mexico, his accomplishments today seem slightly less important than when they were dramatized. To his credit, he lifted diplomacy out of the stupid rut of back-alley name-calling and imbued it with dignity. He saw Mexico's point of view and was willing to be generous. But in general he undermined the basic principles of the Mexican revolution and led the country back toward the Díaz system of stern rule, plunder and catering to the foreigner. He helped ruin Calles as a leader of the Mexican people. Today the pendulum has swung back. The Morrow of Mexico no longer exists.

An official family biographer of Morrow, an Englishman, Harold Nicolson, has written a namby-pamby account of Morrow's life, just the sort of Pollyanna sugar-coating adored by female members of any family of a defunct person. Morrow had his nobilities, his goodness, his unusual charm, wisdom and talents, but he did not get where he was by conforming to all the Sunday School maxims. He had sharp teeth, will, boldness, adroitness, masterful intelligence behind gentlemanly suavity. He was, not a boy in pinafores with curls, but a *man*.

LINDBERGH LOST

MOST OF THE AMERICAN NEWS correspondents in Mexico I knew very well. On the whole their caliber over the years has greatly improved. In the Henry Lane Wilson days, Robert Hammond Murray measured up with the best in the profession, a peer of Gunther or Duranty or Shean. But for the most part in the old days they used to foregather in the *Tres Tranvias* saloon across from the cable office and when imaginations became sufficiently inflamed, would stampede to the telegraph station and send off highly fictional stuff, usually contemptuous of the Mexicans and their ways. Only the bloodthirsty and ridiculous were emphasized, serious political or social news was tabu. The big hat and the pistol held the boards.

As order began to be re-established the various revolutionary governments took cognizance of the vipers in their bosom and from Carranza on did not hesitate to expel unscrupulous correspondents, even though connected with the most influential publications. Several of the large New York dailies were represented by men who took money from anybody to color the news. Other correspondents, if honest in a monetary sense, had little knowledge of economics and public affairs, and mostly were dominated by a criterion of Nordic superiority and contempt for the "yellow-bellies." One amusing correspondent for one of the leading New York dailies was a man who actually couldn't write a grammatical sentence, fortunately not an essential for stenographic cables. He lived with a Mexican woman

by whom he had numerous progeny, and his only interest was in prize-fights. Every morning in the Cosmos Hotel across the street from the cable-office, he could be seen with copies of the two Mexican dailies spread out before him. His entire newspaper gathering effort consisted in concocting a story from the columns of both. After this, he would sit with his big feet up on the window, reading *Adventure Magazine*. Later he was messed in with the fabrication of the Hearst documents and was deported.

At this time the regular correspondents, if not always men who had much economic background, were at least well-trained professionally and in general of fairly high caliber. Even Mr. Hearst at that time had one of the highest grade authorities on foreign affairs who has ever engaged in newspaper work, an author and a man who had for years been in charge of a large European bureau. On the other hand the correspondent of one liberal New York daily was bitterly anti-government and very pro-Catholic, and with false ideas of social climbing and snobbism, so that his news reports never once jibed with the broader editorial policy of his paper.

One correspondent of very high order and very wide experience, Tom Davis, had a number of serious failings.

He was somewhat startled by some things in Mexico. The first sign he stuck up on the wall of his office was:

ALL GUNS MUST BE PUT AWAY IN DRAWERS

The first day he was there, his chief assistant tossed his revolver nonchalantly on a table; it fell to the floor, and a bullet passed right through Tom's chair. Fortunately at that moment Tom was engaged in the unusual pastime for a correspondent of looking up a word in the dictionary, so was uninjured. His assistant, incidentally, was the one supposed to have given the *coup de grâce* to the Ku Klux Klan leader when the pillow-

case brigade staged its unsuccessful assault on the *Excelsior* offices.

Tom was hard-working, brilliant, but he had a periodic failing for his cups. Once a month or so, he would go off on a spree that might last anywhere from one to three days. At such times his wife, Ruth, would take charge of his duties, at which she was as capable as he.

When the alcoholic urge came on him, he would rush to a phone and telephone his wife that he was coming right home with a nice present for her.

But Ruth always knew that this phone call was the beginning of the end; he would not arrive for several days, battered and defeated. But his present was always forthcoming—usually a little puppy dog, which he would buy from some vender and stuff in his overcoat pocket. He had the idea that if he bought a little dog, he would have to take it right home. But invariably the puppy rode around in his overcoat until the spree was over.

Ruth did not care for dogs nor could they keep one in the apartment. I don't know how many friends acquired puppies while Tom and his wife were in Mexico.

I was very fond of Tom, but when he was tipsy he was unpleasant, alternately affectionate and abusive. If he got hold of me at such a time, I would submit to his unescapable entreaties, but invariably would leave my drink sitting on the bar and slip out the back door.

One evening, walking along Avenida Juárez with Noriega Hope, a dramatist and editor of *Revista de Revistas*, I ran into Tom, already flying high. He dragged me into the Broadway Café for a drink.

At one of the side-stall tables was General Palomero López, with a bunch of cronies and several belly-shakers from the Lírico Theater, including Delia Magaña. Palomero López, the official killer for the Calles régime, got rid of unpleasant crim-

inals and political prisoners—they “committed suicide” in their cells. His profession was stamped on his face. He was a tough baby if ever there was one. I knew only one man who had ever really stood up to him, that was my friend Aurelio Manrique who, though quite unarmed, slapped his face over the bier of Obregón and ordered him out of the room.

Tom stopped at their table and with exaggerated bravura called López an *hijo de la chingada*, about as strong an epithet as one can use, not usually said even with a smile.

López’ cronies made a motion for their guns, but López, who knew Tom, merely laughed. Delia Magaña, however, aired her few words of English and snapped out, “Dirty American pig.”

I managed to drag Tom away, but Delia’s remark rankled. He insisted on going back and cleaning out the whole gang.

I had hard work holding him back, but finally got him seated as far away as I could. I told him I would never let him clean them out alone; I would help him, but we should have a drink first. I was hoping his mood would shift abruptly.

I was really worried. López and his gang were not to be trifled with. They were above the law, immune from punishment no matter whom they killed. The truth would never be told. It was not wise for two nice American boys to play with that kind of fire in a foreign land.

When I got Tom calmed down for a moment, I left the table, telling the waiter whom I knew and whom I saw was worried, to keep a close eye on Tom. “If he stirs from his table, push him back, strong-arm him if necessary. I’ll be responsible.”

I slipped him a *tostón*, fifty centavos, and he nodded understandingly.

I rushed out the side door and across the street on the Alameda side, found a policeman. Giving him two pesos, I told him to go in and arrest Tom. He was to walk him up toward San Juan de Letrán to Tío Pepe or Tres Tranvias saloons, where

Tom liked to hang out. I was sure he would find cronies there and never get around to getting back to the Broadway.

Anxiously I waited under the trees. Presently the policeman brought Tom out, a bit roughly, for he was angry, protesting volubly. They walked up Avenida Juárez in the direction I had indicated. I trailed along behind till I saw they had begun to joke together. Believing everything all right, I hailed a taxi and went home.

To my dismay, about seven o'clock the following morning, Ruth phoned me to come out to the house immediately. She was in trouble.

Tom was in jail. Ruth wanted me to get him out.

I rushed downtown, but discovered Tom had paid a fine for disorderly conduct and was out.

Probably he had become bellicose again, this time with the policeman who, losing patience, had dragged him off to the station.

I never told Ruth of my part in his arrest. My conscience did not bother me. I had saved him from the villain's clutches.

Tom was pretty crestfallen, for he had made the police let him telephone the American Embassy. He had routed out the force at a high hour of the night with the story that he was being railroaded out of the country.

He had been chucked into a big cell, where he had sat on the cement all night, alternately worrying and raging and trying to read Wood's *Heavenly Discourse*, which happened to share his overcoat pocket with a puppy.

2

Whenever the correspondents got together, there were always good yarns of sundry adventures while getting news. Several of the newspapermen had covered the Japanese earthquake. Clarence Dubose, whom we called Pete, was in his of-

fice on the fourth floor of a Tokyo building when the great quake started. His Japanese assistant was typing, but did not even pause.

"We'd better get out of here," said Pete.

His assistant shook his head, went on typing. Pete grabbed his hat and dashed.

That building was one of the few left standing in all Tokyo. The city lay in ruins all around. When Pete clambered back up the stairs, he found his assistant still typing. The Jap merely shrugged his shoulders, said one place was as good as another, that if his time had come, it would have come.

Another correspondent on the quake scene told a tall one. He claimed to have been drinking in the cellar bar of one of the large hotels facing the beach. The hotel had split wide open, and the drinkers suddenly looked up at the sky and twisted steel girders. About three stories up, a woman in a bathtub suspended in midair was screaming holy murder. The correspondent climbed up the pipes and wrapped her in his overcoat. All Tokyo was razed, and he didn't know what the deuce to do with a nude woman. Finally he unrolled her into the sea. Only the drinkers at the bar and this woman were saved, not a very Biblical or Clark Gable version.

During the Villa upheaval in northern Mexico, a correspondent of one of the New York dailies got tired of dashing around in the sagebrush. He had bought a Mexican cayuse for about thirty dollars, which went down on his "flimflam" sheet as \$500. Thereafter every week the flimflam sheet would carry the item: "Shoeing right forehoof, \$5. Shoeing left rear hoof, \$10," until the New York office cabled: "What are you riding, a centipede?"

At last he could stand the life no longer and crawled out of the brush into Chihuahua City. As all communications were shot to hell, and his word was as good as anybody's, from

Chihuahua he sent a "Nite" piece describing an imaginary battle.

By Special Relay to Chihuahua. A crucial engagement is about to open eighty miles northwest of —. Your correspondent, with the Villa general staff, on a knoll overlooking the battlefield, is watching the deployment of troops through his glasses.

The correspondent described minutely the lay of the land. Presently the enemy was sighted. Firing began. Gradually it developed into a major battle. Then his dispatch read:

The enemy has apparently located the knoll of Villa and his staff. Shells are now bursting all around us. On the right the artillery is laying down a barrage.

Some more description. Every little bit he would describe a shell bursting on the knoll.

The message continued: "At this moment General Villa has given orders—"

The dispatch was left hanging in air, a perfect suspense. He caught the caboose of a freight lumbering up to Ciudad Juárez and a day later was quartered in the best hotel, had soaked himself in a tub, picked off the cooties, gotten a shave and fresh clothes, and for a week stayed gloriously drunk at the bar.

At last he deigned to send a dispatch to his paper.

By Special Relay to El Paso. As your correspondent was dictating his message on the field of battle last week, another shell broke on the knoll, and he was struck by shrapnel. He is now at the base hospital convalescing, and as soon as he is able will send full details.

"Hospital expenses, \$500," went down on the flimflam sheet, and the New York daily headlined the story of its "brave correspondent wounded on the field of battle." For many weeks he kept on sending messages from El Paso, headed "By Special Relay," before his ruse was discovered.

3

When it was known that Morrow was bringing Lindbergh to Mexico on a solo good-will flight, Pete Dubose of the Associated Press asked me if I would help cover the story. He couldn't afford to pay much, but he was short-handed.

I wouldn't take anything, told him I'd do it out of friendship and the chance to be in on the ground floor.

No one knew just when Lindbergh might take off, so Pete had me sleep in his house, and his wife Clare, also working on the story, gave us coffee about four A.M. We were out at the Valbuena field by daybreak.

The press tables were in a tall lookout tower. A special reviewing stand for the President, cabinet and distinguished guests had been erected along one side of the hangars, directly overlooking the landing field. There, in due time, appeared, among others, Calles, the cabinet, prominent generals, Ambassador Morrow and the rest of the Embassy staff.

Both the United Press and Associated Press had direct wires to the field. The United Press man discovered Pete's chief assistant, a Mexican, trying to cut the U.P. wire. This would have given the A.P. a complete scoop, for with the jam and the police control of traffic there would have been no way of getting messages out for hours. The U.P. correspondent was furious, and naturally thought Pete had tried to pull a dirty stunt. But Pete was angrier than the U.P. man, and almost fired his assistant on the spot.

Pete detailed me to cover the field. From there occasionally I would go over to the press tower to report.

Presently, as the crowds got greater, I was unable to leave the field. Various newspaper men on returning had been denied access to it despite their credentials. Eventually Arthur Con-

stantine of the New York *World*, several news photographers and myself were the only ones left within the lines.

The morning dragged on with no sign of Lindbergh. It was reported that he ought to arrive not later than ten o'clock. But ten o'clock came and went.

Unfortunately for us, it was a blistering hot day. The sun wheeled west so that it now blazed straight down into the reviewing stand. Noon had come. Lunch time came and went. President Calles, a big man, and Ambassador Morrow, a very little man, were standing with their backs to the field and the sun. People were getting restless. Lemonade and ice-cream vendors were doing a thriving business, but not on the field.

My own mouth was soon caked from the heat and the clouds of dust, but there was no way of getting a drink without leaving the field and thereby losing my place of vantage.

Time dragged on and on. It became a dismal probability that Lindbergh had crashed. Everybody was sick with disappointment. Every time Morrow turned about to scan the skies, his face was lined with anxiety. Several stunting Mexican planes crashed before our eyes, not a pleasant reminder of what might have happened to Lindy.

If he crashed, instead of good-will it would bring universal sorrow and doubtless, in the irrational way people and nations have, Mexico would have been blamed.

The day grew still hotter. Lindy was five hours late. One by one important people left the reviewing stand. Future President Portes Gil took his fat brown bulk off. Several army generals left. Cabinet ministers sneaked away. Finally only a few people beside Morrow and Calles were left on the stand.

But if officials in the reviewing stand had given up hope, not so the crowd. It waited patiently all those hours, and up until the last, people were still streaming out to the field by tens of

thousands, a vast mass of humanity in which sandal-shod Indians predominated.

Still no word. My mouth was dry, my lips cracked, but I dared not leave the field.

LINDBERGH REACHES VALBUENA

WHEN ALL HOPE WAS NEARLY gone, a report suddenly came through that Lindy had been sighted circling over Toluca, a mountain city about three hours by auto from Mexico City.

At once a dozen planes whipped up into the sky and streaked over the high mountains which rise in a solid ring around the upland valley of Mexico. In the direction they disappeared lay a large, white, puffy cloud, motionless in the turquoise sky, a sinister portent of an impending thundershower.

All eyes were strained in the direction of Toluca. Everyone had been sure Lindy had crashed. How could he suddenly resurrect and be flying over Toluca? Possibly a false alarm.

Forty minutes went by.

A cry burst from every throat! One great roar!

Two planes were seen swooping over the far mountain crest, like tiny swallows.

The cheers died away. The two planes were Mexican army planes.

Just as once more everyone was giving away to gloom, right out of the heart of the white puff of cloud burst another plane.

Lindbergh! Even at that distance one could recognize the plane.

A dramatic arrival. The two escort planes had flown lower and on either side of the cloud, but Lindy had burst right through it like a magic plane out of nowhere.

The vanished had suddenly and miraculously appeared. Peo-

ple of olden times would have spoken of God and miracles.

He followed the two escort planes and swept low over Valbuena field with a terrific roar of his motor, circled up and away, wings flashing silver.

Three times he whirled over the towers of Mexico, then came down in a perfect long glide landing—with barely enough gas to make it.

He really had been lost. Following railroad tracks, he had flown far south into the state of Michoacán, then had circled back, finally had been sighted over Toluca.

As his plane roared into the field, the crowd swept the soldiers aside and rammed head on toward the plane.

Ambassador Morrow had taken his stand in the Embassy auto as far out toward the field as he dared go. A line of soldiers was there guarding him and ready to throw out a cordon to see that he got through as promptly as possible to Lindy's plane.

I had a good head start of the crowd, but now motorcycle police came roaring down to head off everyone.

Disregarding shouted orders not to approach the plane, I ran forward blindly. A motorcycle cop drove his machine head on into me, and we both went down in a cloud of dust, I with a bruised leg which left me lame for over a week, my flesh a mass of blue and green.

But at the moment I scarcely noticed the pain and leapt up and dashed on toward the plane.

Morrow and an Embassy attaché and Arthur Constantine got there first, though neither Morrow nor Constantine were young men. The police had formed a cordon with linked hands about the plane.

I bucked the line, was tossed back, and as the police front broke a moment, I ducked through, just in time to see Lindy poke his head out of the cockpit and hear Morrow ask:

"Are you tired, my boy?"

Lindy shook his head and stepped out smiling. He was rushed on up to the reviewing stand.

Aided by the police, Morrow made his way behind him in the milling crowd as best he could. A little man, this master of millions and of nations, he shouldered his way through the crowd determinedly.

I had a taxi waiting all day, strategically placed. By bumping across several fields and ditches, I managed to get off the single main avenue out to Valbuena, through which now no private auto could proceed. Twisting through the cobblestone alleys of a poor quarter of the city, I succeeded in getting to the Embassy ahead of anybody who had been at the field.

In fact I had to wait there two hours before Lindy appeared, after having made his way slowly through the cheering mobs.

2

At the Embassy I found, calmly waiting, the special correspondent of the *New York Times*, which had the right of exclusive interview with Lindy and a monopoly on the detailed account of his flight.

This showed commendable leadership, initiative and willingness to spend money on the part of the *New York Times*, and Lindy cannot be entirely condemned for permitting a near-monopoly of the news of his flight and thereby getting considerable financial return. But at the same time his doings were of such universal public interest, he was on such an official mission, that other newspapers can hardly be criticized for trying to break through this monopoly setup. It would also seem that as this was a good-will flight, ostensibly to serve the one purpose of fomenting better relations between the two countries, Lindbergh should have been sufficiently well compensated not to have had to peddle the good-will chiefly to one organ; rather,

the full record of his flight should have been made available to all publications in order that it have the widest diffusion and effect. But it is rare in this world that even the noblest of efforts are free of commercialism. Many of the ills that have befallen Lindbergh have been in part due to such commercialization of his enterprises.

At the Embassy a reception was in preparation. I caught sight of myself in a mirror. My face was streaked with grime, my coat caked with dust, my hair wild.

I asked a butler for a glass of water, for I was thirsty after so many long hours in the sun.

He disappeared but no water appeared.

I asked another where I could clean up. He went to see but never came back. All were too busy putting on the finishing touches for receiving Lindy and the guests, some of whom were already arriving.

Presently—Lindy had not yet come—a butler appeared with a tray of champagne for the early guests. I seized up three glasses one after the other, and drained them down before the astonished butler could get the tray out of my reach.

As Lindbergh neared, we could hear the cheers for blocks. Finally his car rolled through the gates of the Embassy with its escort of motorcycle police.

Lindy looked like a pagan god with petals in his hair. He rose out of a tonneau solidly filled to overflowing with flowers. Even his escorts were loaded down with wreaths.

In a jiffy Lindbergh had changed his clothes, putting on a light-weight suit of gray, a soft white shirt and striped tie. He came out onto the terrace to talk briefly to me and a number of other newspaper men who had arrived.

The usual banal questions were asked. The usual banal answers were given. Lindbergh answered each with a faint smile, behind which lurked a hint of irritation.

Somebody asked him about air pockets.

"No such thing," he replied shortly, and gave a short technical explanation.

"Aerial navigation doesn't depend upon such primitive things," he replied to another question. "Today it is as scientific as steering a ship at sea."

I asked him just why he had lost his way.

"The stations here in Mexico don't have their names painted on the roofs as in America. And nearly all the mountain country looks the same," and then he added very seriously, quite unconscious of irony, what for me was the most humorous touch of the day, "Besides, I got my maps from the War Department in Washington, and they aren't any good."

That remark so guilelessly uttered was a prize utterance of headline importance. I made it the lead of my interview story.

But it never saw the light of day. What paper of our great and truthful press would care to print such a slight on the War Department, or at such a moment intrude any note other than fulsome adulation?

But maybe it is just as well that the remark died stillborn. There is no particular reason, unless we expect to be upon colonial conquest bent like Italy or Japan, for the War Department to have accurate maps of Mexico.

Ambassador Morrow finally came out, suggested that Lindy had given us enough time, that to divulge more would be a violation of his contract with the *New York Times*, and led him off with a pat on the shoulder. As the latter left, Morrow turned to us with a beaming face, "Isn't he a fine American boy!"

After dashing to a telephone, I fell into a brief conversation with Will Rogers, whom Morrow had also invited as a goodwill to Mexico. Though Will Rogers indulged in no repartee

—which probably he reserved for a proper audience and occasion when he himself was the focus of interest—it was not necessary to hear his wit to like him without reservations. He was just like a simple backwoods farmer, who has learned to dress up a bit, something solid and generous and deeply wise about him. In person, he was much as he appeared in the movies. Not quite successfully he was trying to conceal a wad of gum. In good slang, he was a “natural.”

And one simply had to be proud of Lindy. One has to be proud of the best of anything. One could be proud that the United States had turned out one of the best flyers in the whole world. A mechanical genius, a sort of super-chauffeur, quick with hands and body, excellent reflexes, sensory alertness, a typical American product, he was precisely the sort of hero that adolescent America, with all its mechanical gadgets, can fully appreciate and honor.

He was not truly the type patterned to be a Mexican hero, for Mexicans demand greater ruthlessness, cunning and biting intelligence in their heroes.

But now all Mexico idolized Lindy. The Mexicans idolized him precisely because he was so American, and that indeed was an achievement. It was by all odds the cleverest, most dramatic thing of all the dramatic things Morrow did in Mexico.

But several discordant notes crept in. First, Mamma Lindbergh flew to Mexico to see her boy and share in his glories. Mexicans honor their mothers far more than do Anglo-Saxons, so evidently it was felt that this stunt would appeal to the greater family sentimentalism of Mexicans.

But it was precisely the wrong note. If Mexicans honor their mothers far more than do Americans, they do not expect their mothers to come flying through the air to intrude into this sort of publicity-reaping just because their sons have achieved fame

and glory. Family affairs, in fact, are considered too sacred to be aired to the world with ostentation.

Presently, when Lindbergh flew on south, and at this precise moment the plane of Mamma Lindbergh wheeled out and up and flew north, both leaving the field at practically the same moment, Mexicans snickered at the crudeness of the stunt. This was carrying the American touch quite too far; Mexicans, above all else, demand dignity in their heroes.

4

Now, as Lindbergh decided to continue his flight on south, Mexicans felt that they had been taken in a bit. Mexico, then, was not the final goal of his magnificent flight, but just one leg of a journey. The first leg had been to demonstrate good-will, a legitimate utilization of Lindy's world fame for political purposes and for Morrow, but to use that same fame to help white-wash American aggression in the Caribbean, that, felt the Mexicans, quite cheapened his flight to Mexico. A local Congressman hotly denounced Lindy's "imperialist" flight on south.

Rather childish perhaps, but soon they were murmuring that, in helping the Republican bigwigs to put a good face on armed intervention, he was allowing the politicians to suck the blood of his fame. Articles to the effect that he should not have allowed himself to be used for such ulterior purposes crept into the Latin-American press.

This note of criticism sharpened as he continued south. Protests poured in. Leaflets were circulated in the places he landed. Demonstrations were staged. People were jailed when they protested against his flight. None of this was told in our free American press.

Lindy has great mechanical genius and physical staying powers, but for moral staying powers, I admire even more his magnificent father, Senator Lindbergh, one of the "willful men"

of 1917, who suffered unpopularity, public abuse and defeat rather than deviate from his sincere beliefs or abrogate his official rights and obligations.

Long after Lindbergh's flights to Europe and to the Pan-American Conference, when President Roosevelt was valiantly trying to correct abuses in the large private air corporations which had improperly looted the American treasury, Lindbergh, in their employ, came out with a dutiful statement attacking the President's efforts. He threw the great weight of his personality on the side of business spoils rather than that of social welfare.

After he left his own country, damning banditry and reporters, he went over to Germany to kowtow with the higher-ups of a government that represents the most brutal spectacle of political banditry and organized terror displayed in modern times. There he delivered a speech which contained the juvenile notion that because men have more technical knowledge to play around with airplanes there will be less likelihood of war, because men with such knowledge will be too wise to make war. He was merely saying that the wolves would be good and wise because they have sharp teeth.

A note of Lindy's persistent friction with the press cropped up while he was in Mexico. He took a trip to Morrow's home in Cuernavaca. The correspondents had to stampede after him. Suppose Lindy got into trouble, or his car had an accident, or he eloped with Anne Morrow? Any of a dozen things might happen. The men who rushed down there not only had to protect their papers, but their own jobs, which meant protecting their wives and children.

He turned on us harshly. "Can't I ever get five minutes away from you fellows?"

One correspondent spoke up sharply. "Don't imagine that we enjoy it any more than you do, Mr. Lindbergh."

One can entirely appreciate Lindbergh's desire for privacy. But if he has lacked this, in part it has been due to his own commercialization of the news about himself. It is certainly not the fault of the wage-earning correspondents. It is the fault of the insatiable curiosity of the American people; it is the fault of spot-news competition; it is the fault of the commercial needs of circulation and advertising of the great papers and of many ensuing unethical practices which have grown up. Has not Lindy himself sought personal gain and profit from permitting a semi-monopoly of news about his flights? Why then should he complain if others operate on the identical principle of commercial gain? And why should he take it out on the correspondents who are merely obliged to gain their daily bread at tasks so unpleasant as having to interview Lindy?

Whenever so-called great men, be it Bernard Shaw, or Huey Long or Toscanini abuse or physically maltreat reporters or smash cameras, you can put it down that in them is an uncouthness and a blind spot that ill-accords with their pretensions of greatness.

MEXICANS NUMBER THEIR VOLCANOES

SOCIALLY AND PROFESSIONALLY I met most of the diplomatic representatives of the various countries. Aside from Morrow and prior to the coming of the vibrant Alvarez del Vayo, Ambassador of the new Spanish republic, the most significant were the Soviet representatives.

Mexico was the first New World country to recognize the Soviets. The first Soviet minister, Petskovsky, was a big booming man with gnarled tobacco teeth showing through a dark beard. He had spent eight years in a Siberian prison under the Tsar, had been a ramrod of the underground revolutionary movement, a close friend of Lenin's. He had married the woman who had nursed him when he was Ambassador in England, a simple kindly person, more a homebody than a typical diplomat's wife. Petskovsky himself was a brusque, tactless but jovial man, very obstinate, aggressive and quick-tempered, who got off on the wrong foot from the very first moment.

Also, the Soviet foreign office began its mistakes with Mexico even before recognition was accorded. When Luis N. Morones, head of the then strongest labor federation, the CROM, toured Europe, he was refused admittance to the Soviet Union, a slight that rankled in him deeply. Other CROM leaders who did get in were ignored and shown no consideration. Communism, then following the Trotsky credo, was tight as a drum those days, no popular front business.

Nevertheless, when Calles took office, though Morones became his Minister of Industry, Commerce and Labor, recogni-

tion was extended to the Soviet Union. Several factors entered. Russia was a possible market for Mexican *henequén* and other products. The hint had been passed that recognition would result in heavy purchases, the same bait Borodin had held out back in 1920. The later recognition by Uruguay, in fact, was actually bought by such commercial purchases on a big scale. Another factor was Calles' sudden anti-American policy.

As President-elect, Calles had gone to Europe to get medical treatment. In Europe, particularly in Germany, he was received with great *éclat* and distinction, with military parades and other magnificent gestures. Returning via the United States, he was practically ignored—what in his mind must have been tantamount to a snub. We had gotten what we wanted out of Mexico, so why bother about Calles? The whole subsequent relations of the two countries might have been different had Calles been given a little flattering attention. He went home and promptly broke down the petroleum agreement, started that hectic controversy all over again. Undoubtedly one reason for recognizing the Soviet government was Calles' desire to irritate official United States. To recognize the Soviets was one way to do so.

But the Soviet Union at once gave affronts to Mexico. Even before Petskovsky arrived, Foreign Minister Tchitcherin announced that Mexico would be used as a base for Soviet activities in the New World. His words were probably badly translated, but Calles released a tart statement that the Soviet representatives would be required to abide by international law; no violation of Mexico's sovereign rights would be tolerated.

Petskovsky therefore arrived in a frigid atmosphere. Instead of trying to strengthen his diplomatic position, he blundered clumsily by criticizing the CROM, the official labor group, as a reactionary organization opposed to the true interests of the workers and peasants of Mexico.

This was very serious meddling. His words drew sharp gunfire from Morones and the CROM leaders who denounced him and Russian propaganda; and from then on Morones, a member of the cabinet, never missed a chance to charge the Soviet Legation with improper actions: propaganda was being disseminated; Communists were being abetted; the Legation was harboring foreign Communists and enemies of the Mexican government.

Petskovsky certainly made the three-story Legation on Calle del Rin a center for all labor elements opposed to the CROM and the Mexican government. The Communist Party expanded rapidly. The Communist paper, *Machete*, improved its format and increased its size four-fold. Numerous left-wing labor and peasant leaders were given free trips to Russia, free scholarships and other advantages. From Spain, Germany and the United States, the Third International sent out numbers of secret propagandists to Mexico to help direct the work of the local Communist Party.

But Petskovsky also realized, quite too late, that you can't knock hornets' nests to pieces unless you are properly protected, which he was not. His position in Mexico rapidly grew untenable. He made attempts to rectify this bad beginning. Various CROM leaders were belatedly given visas to visit the Soviet Union. But, shown no special consideration there, they came back peddling fantastic stories about being spied upon, robbed, attacked; they were shocked by nudism and the freedom of the marriage relations, the sad fate of the "enslaved" Russian workers. They sounded like Mr. Hearst on a spree.

Morones was further bitterly angered when, during the railroad strike in Mexico, the Soviet railway federation donated \$25,000 to the local strike fund. This was official Soviet intervention in Mexico with a vengeance. Morones' organization, which did not control the railway brotherhoods, for a long

time had been fighting to get a foothold there. When this general strike tied up the lines, Morones, as Minister of Labor, promptly declared the strike illegal. At the same time his own minority organization served as a strike-breaking outfit. He was bending every effort, à la Gompers and Green in similar situations, to smash the railway brotherhoods and swing the workers into the CROM. But the Soviet government backed his enemies.

Though technically the money was sent by the Russian railway workers, Morones knew perfectly well that no funds could be exported from the Soviet Union without the full approval of the government. Relations between the two countries grew decidedly strained.

2

Petskovsky was finally replaced by Madame Kollontay, also a revolutionist of the old days. Her coming was preceded by fastastic propaganda about her past love-life and her great collection of Paris gowns and jewels, some of them said to be stolen Crown gems—all quite out of keeping with her status as a representative of a supposedly workers' government. But, if anything, this disposed certain local groups in her favor and gave the impression that, unlike Petskovsky, she would not be "a dangerous propagandist."

On her arrival she took up her residence, not at the Legation, but at the Hotel Geneva. A woman of about fifty, she was very well preserved and had great charm and simplicity. I never saw her in more than two or three different plain dresses, usually black, and she used no jewelry at all.

A few days after her arrival, I was invited by the head of the National Library Department, Esperanza Bringas, a very clever woman, to go riding with her and Madame Kollontay and have tea at San Angel Inn. The drive along the Tlapam road gave

s a good view of the truncated volcanoes in the Valley of Mexico. One a tobacco company had defiled by carving a gigantic ad:

FUMEN NUM. 12

(Smoke No. 12—a brand of cigarettes)

Kollontay turned to me. "Why do the Mexicans number their volcanoes?"

"To be able to get the fire engines out quickly when they rupt," I replied.

When I explained, she laughed heartily at her own blunder. She had decided from her knowledge of French that *fumen* had something to do with "smoke," so must be the Spanish word for "volcano." The other numbers then must be on the other sides.

During her stay she was much upset by a pirated edition of her book on marriage and love in the Soviet Union, badly translated under the unseemly title *Red Love*. Hearing of the proposed edition, she tried unsuccessfully to stop it. The fly-by-night editors, however, did offer royalties and agreed to end her proofs.

Although she knew English fairly well, she was not up to handling the proofs and asked me to go over them with her. The publishers had altered the text to make it cheap and sensational in the best style of HAPPY ROMANCE. By the time we got through the proofs, they looked like the combined hen-cratching of the Perfection Poultry Yards. The publishers hereupon brought out the book without making any of the corrections she demanded.

Kollontay was subjected to the same attacks from Morones and the CROM as her predecessor, but she went her way quietly, and her social contacts were more general than those

of Petskovsky. She mingled with all classes of Mexican society and was well received everywhere.

Unfortunately the altitude affected her badly and, having been subjected to numerous pointed discourtesies by the Mexican government, she got a transfer to Norway. Just before she was leaving, she held several parties for her friends in addition to her regular diplomatic leave-takings. To one of these I had been invited but did not go.

Just before this the famous Arcos raids had occurred in London, a prelude to the breaking off of relations with the Soviets by England. In the raided documents were several addresses of supposed agents in Mexico. The Mexicans, inveterate imitators, now staged a raid of their own on the Soviet Legation.

As Madame Kollontay's party broke up, the police rushed the place, rounded up all the guests and took them off to the police station. When Madame Kollontay came out to go over to the Geneva, the police ordered the taxi-driver to go to the station also. Leon Haykiss, the first secretary, jumped on the running-board beside them and told them sharply they were dealing with a diplomatic representative. After showing her credentials, she was allowed to proceed.

At the police station, the police discovered among the prisoners some very prominent persons, including a member of the Chamber of Deputies, who according to the law could not be arrested. The police thereupon apologized, explaining that hearing singing they thought that an illegal religious reunion was being held—a rather flimsy excuse, since the large Legation shield was on the front gate.

No apology was every extended to Kollontay by the Mexican government for this breach of international law and gratuitous insult, and when she departed she was not extended the customary protocol leave-taking. Relations were now, indeed, in a bad way.

3

The third and last Soviet representative in Mexico was Dr. Makar, a chubby Jewish medico who had served with the Red armies in the Ukraine. His wife was a fine, large, placid woman; Makar himself, a plump bureaucrat, with a wheezing ingratiating voice, who loved to eat and dine well. I was always amused, on the several occasions I lunched at the Legation, to be given a very nicely starched napkin so full of holes as to be almost unusable. I noticed that no regular member of the staff had such a napkin. Makar would always apologize profusely to me and other guests, remarking jokingly that after all he did not represent a rich capitalist country like the United States, but a true workers' country. As a matter of fact, from Petkovsky's day on the Legation entertained lavishly. Several times when Makar was there he invited me to attend reunions of former high Mexican officials and the diplomatic corps. On such occasions everything was most elegantly arranged, the champagne flowed, and special caterers were hired that all might be the last word. During one such gathering I sidled over to Makar and whispered in his ear, "What's happened to that hole-y napkin of mine?"

Though Makar had a misplaced heavy sense of humor, he was always jolly, and I liked him. An inveterate match-maker, he decided I ought to marry the pretty Russian stenographer in the Legation. He was always inviting me over on some pretext or other to get the two of us together. Before long he always blushed. His efforts were beginning to have effect, at least on her. I decided to disillusion her promptly, so at the very first opportunity made such a sudden and unprepared demand on her that, properly shocked, she thought me a terrible person, or at any rate avoided me.

By this time, in its foreign relations the Soviet government,

growing more nationalistic, had begun to value diplomatic goodwill more than Communism. Russian nationalism, wearing the sheep's skin of Communism, was reasserting itself. Stalin was beginning to throw the various Communist Parties abroad to the wolves whenever by so doing he in any way strengthened the Soviet diplomatic position. Orders had apparently gone out to the various Soviet Legations to limit all official contacts to Government and upper-class circles and avoid local radical labor elements. Makar scarcely allowed Mexican Communists to step inside the Legation, or, if he did so, very secretly. He went in for the National Geographical Society, the medical associations, and cultivated contacts with all the important cultural groups and the best society he could wedge into.

This was the time when the Communist Party was super-dogmatic. Its famed party-line was drawn around a set of rigid beliefs more tightly than a pair of circus tights. Anyone those days, however liberal, who did not mention the class-struggle, unearned increment and the materialist conception of history six times in every breath, who did not advocate getting out and waving the red flag over a cobblestone barricade, was being denounced as a filthy "Social Fascist," and a bloated plutocrat was an angel of sweetness and light compared to a "Social Fascist."

Thus the wide-eyed communism sponsored by the Soviet government abroad contrasted humorously with the nationalistic tendencies and the diplomacy of respectability and typical power-intrigue being promoted by that same government.

A commercial attaché, Truskonov, and two assistants were now brought in, and strenuous efforts were now being made to stimulate trade. The Soviet government made heavy purchases of lead, *henequén* and other Mexican products and was actively trying to distribute Russian movies, handicrafts, cereals,

woods, etc. It was in Mexico that I saw *Potempkin*, *Mother*, *The Mauser and the Cross* and several other noteworthy films.

Truskonov had been a Russian emigrant to Argentina where he had worked as a dock laborer. He was a big bull of a man with a shiny bald skull, a handclasp that cracked your bones, and extremely tactless manners, though he was good-natured and extremely sensitive to the slightest criticism or indifference. He was married to a flashy blonde with much sex-appeal, who flirted outrageously and loved fine clothes and swank.

Later, after Truskonov left Mexico, I was informed he committed suicide, some people said because of the irreconcilable bourgeois demands of his wife and the limitations of a Soviet bureaucratic job.

The first secretary of the Legation, during most of the period of the three Soviet Ministers, was Leon Haykiss, a quick, nervous little fellow of Polish extraction, extremely likable, a thorough student, and a man with a brilliant mind and great sincerity. There was never any sympathy between him and a strictly bureaucratic type like Makar, and Makar eventually did him dirt. A false accusation was made when one of the Indian servant girls in the Legation got in a family way. Haykiss was hurriedly recalled. Today he is the Soviet Minister to Spain and said by some to be the brains behind the Valencia defense.

Minister Makar, if a gregarious, easygoing man, interested in a soft job, was not without great personal ambition. He saw in Morrow's presence in Mexico a grand opportunity to further diplomatic recognition of the Soviet Union by the United States, and several times tried to persuade me to arrange a secret meeting between him and Morrow. I did not fancy the job for various reasons. Besides, I was planning to leave Mexico about this time for a trip to the United States and Europe.

Later Morrow did meet Makar in Taxco, apparently quite by accident, though I suspect it was all prearranged. Makar never would tell me precisely what direction their conversation had taken. I never asked Morrow.

MEXICO THROWS OUT THE BOLSHEVIKS

THE ULTIMATE RUPTURE BETWEEN Mexico and Russia came after I returned from a long European trip, but I was in Mexico when it happened and the details logically should be told at this point.

Makar, for all his studied aloofness from the Mexican Communists, was sitting on a volcano without knowing it. Morrow, though he believed that the United States should recognize the Soviet Union, had carried on a policy which definitely contributed to the rupture of the relations between Mexico and the Soviets. With the shift of Mexican politics toward conservatism, friction was bound to develop between the local authorities and local peasant and labor elements not affiliated with the official CROM. It did. And naturally the government took the demagogic course of ascribing all its difficulties to the Communist elements. This in turn led to increasing hostility toward the Soviet Legation.

President Portes Gil (though when he was elected he was supposed to be the reddest of the Red) began the real onslaught on labor and the peasants. I interviewed him for the *New York Times* shortly after he took office, a meeting arranged by an intimate friend of us both, the well-known diplomat and author, Isidro Fabela. We went up in the President's private red-plush elevator of the National Palace, and waited briefly in an ante-room. There Fabela pointed out to me the tall red-backed chair at a big conference table where President

Madero had sat when he was shot at. The bullet hole still showed in the upholstery.

Portes Gil received us at about six P.M., shortly after a long trip which had been featured by an attempt to wreck the Presidential train. He seemed perfectly cool, not at all weary, and kept me for over two hours.

A florid heavy-set man with big brown features and a suggestion of negro blood (his grandfather was a Haitian), he was seated behind a large, carved desk. He was dressed in an expensive, well-tailored, cream-colored suit, and wore a soft silk shirt and large dark tie with a hint of color in it. His eyes are large and black, very direct, soft and hard at the same time; his hair, straight and black like an Indian's, and sleeked down; his ample face is slightly disfigured—from powder stains from a pistol once fired at him at close range in an amorous escapade.

He rose and came around his desk to meet us, indicating comfortable chairs in a corner of his office. After the introduction Fabela offered to withdraw, but at my suggestion he remained for the entire interview.

Portes Gil has an unusually magnetic and genial personality, is one of the most forceful and cunning political leaders I have ever met. In many ways he reminded me of ex-President Emilio Chamorro of Nicaragua in physique, mannerisms, temperament and political ingeniousness, except that in one hour's talk in Managua, Chamorro told me more outright lies than all the rest of the politicians of the world put together with whom I have ever talked, whereas Portes Gil gave me only truthful and direct answers. One might differ with Portes Gil's purposes, tactics and ideas, but one could not quarrel with his factual statements.

Knowing him for a bold person, as shown by his energetic and original policies when Governor of Tamaulipas, the north-west oil state of Mexico, I shot to him several ticklish questions

about international relations. Perhaps now he felt more responsibility as President, for he shied off, almost froze up entirely. Coldly he suggested that I submit my questions in writing; he would reply in the same manner.

I assured him I had no wish to jeopardize him, but that the method he proposed would destroy all the spontaneity of the interview. It would be far preferable for us to talk with complete freedom, but as a safeguard to him an official stenographer should be present. He could then present me with an exact transcript, after he had eliminated anything which he considered inimical.

While we waited for the steno, I swung over to two topics uppermost in his mind at the moment, his conflict with labor-leader Morones and with the press. He warmed up to these two themes, later said I could use anything he had uttered without stenographic notes.

2

Ambassador Morrow, as I have indicated, had been worried about the election of Obregón on a pro-peasant program. Obregón had aroused the agrarian elements from one end of the country to the other, but when he was assassinated, Morrow could breathe more easily again. He was also doubtful of Portes Gil, who had quite a radical record, but felt that he was merely an extension of Calles' personality and could be managed. Morrow had a conference with Portes Gil during the same days I did and told me he had been very favorably impressed. The Ambassador had taken up a dozen points or so and Portes Gil, without taking notes, had at once and in identical order replied clearly and amply, though some were very technical matters.

Certainly if to crush the Mexican peasant movement was one of Morrow's desires, Portes Gil soon proved a capable

instrument. The President's antagonism to existing labor and peasant groups first manifested itself in his aggressive attacks on Morones and the CROM. Through police pressure and other means he quite crippled that organization. In destroying the more conservative labor forces of the country, Portes Gil claimed to favor honest and more radical labor groups. But when a new leftist federation of national scope was attempted to take the place of the CROM, the so-called CSUM, the Mexican Unitarian Trade Union Confederation, Portes Gil soon cracked down on that still more fiercely. Soon all labor and peasant elements met with official hostility. Persecutions began in earnest. Labor leaders were arrested, some were sent off to Islas Marías without trial. A real reign of terror was instituted against peasant leaders, who were murdered on the highways and byways all over the land. Morrow's program for putting an end to the agrarian program was succeeding perfectly.

Portes Gil, at Calles' behest, was also bent on building up a new official party, the National Revolutionary Party, to monopolize all political functions in the Republic. He succeeded. In this, he and Calles were advised by Morrow, who was always talking up the American two-party system as ideal for Mexico. Calles was shoved into the new enterprise, which became not a two-party but a one-party system, by Morrow. What any country needs, of course, is economic justice for its people, whereupon the particular political machinery does not make much difference; it soon becomes "democratic."

I was absent from Mexico during much of Portes Gil's persecutions, but the news of it was played up abroad, so that later when President-elect Ortiz Rubio made his tour of the United States, he was greeted on every hand with hostile Communist demonstrations, featured by police counter-violence. Simultaneously, demonstrations against Mexican legations were staged all over the world; several were stoned. Ortiz Rubio was furi-

ous and naturally believed these demonstrations had been fomented by the Soviet government.

Sharp interchanges between the two governments occurred. Mexico refused to concur in the Soviet contention that the acts of the Third International were independent of the Soviet authorities, though earlier under Calles it had insisted to the Soviets that its own official labor organization, the CROM, was quite independent of the Mexican government.

The break came even before Ortiz Rubio took office. One day I was up for a press conference at the Mexican foreign office on Juárez Avenue when the Minister, Genaro Estrada, very gravely handed us typewritten sheets.

Estrada was a big, fleshy man with porcine face and thick-lensed glasses, who had written some amiable poetry, a worthless novel of manners, and slept in a big medieval bed with a canopy. He was, however, one of the keenest men in the government and one of the most highly cultured Ministers of Foreign Affairs Mexico has ever had. His recent death was probably hastened by his efforts in behalf of the Spanish Loyalist cause.

The press-release he now handed us stated sharply that the Mexican government had withdrawn its entire staff and important archives from the Soviet Union and intended to have no more traffic with the Soviet representative in Mexico. The statement accused the Soviet authorities with having fomented unfriendly acts against the Mexican government on Mexican soil and throughout the world. It argued that the distinction between the Third International and the Soviet government could not be taken seriously.

We newspaper men had a sensational document in our hands. Mexico, though it was not said in so many words, had broken off relations without even showing the courtesy of notifying

the Soviets, not even to the extent of sending their legation a copy of the insulting news release.

3

The most interesting news angle would be to find out Makar's reactions to the document, and I swooped around the corner of near-by Rosales Street to the Legation to find out what they were.

He hadn't had the slightest inkling that this was brewing. He stared at the statement I showed him in a dazed fashion. He grew very nervous but refused to believe it meant what it implied. It was not, he insisted, a diplomatic break, merely a warning. He had not been formally handed his passports to leave the country. The unfortunate episode would blow over. A little patience.

I could not make him realize the true facts. He went into hermetic retirement until he could receive instructions from his government. Since no other correspondent had shown him the courtesy of acquainting him with Estrada's statement, thereafter I was the only newspaper man who could get to him. As I was by then doing only magazine stuff and was no longer much interested in immediate news, I turned all my information over in each instance to my friends John Lloyd and Charles Nutter of the Associated Press.

4

Many Mexicans saw in this rupture the fine hand of Ambassador Morrow. A disagreeable incident had just occurred between the United States and the Soviet Union. Secretary of State Stimson had just invoked the Kellogg pacts against Russia for its drastic punitive border actions against China at the time of the squabbling over the Chinese Northern Railway through Manchuria. But Light Horse Harry Stimson was slow. By the

time he had gotten into action the matter had already been patched up between the two countries, and Litvinof sent our American Don Quixote a sarcastic note about meddling in matters of which he was not informed. Now, many Mexicans said that kicking Makar out of Mexico was merely an indirect reply of the American State Department to Litvinof's impudence.

This view—quite unsubstantiated—always seemed far-fetched to me. I doubt if it bothered Morrow in the slightest that Mexico had recognized the Soviet Union. He had quite the upper hand in Mexican affairs. The Portes Gil administration was handling all local Communists quite drastically.

The rupture was merely an inevitable product of the long series of mistakes made by Soviet diplomacy in Mexico, which led to irritation after irritation. It was the product of the first unpleasant incidents attendant upon recognition of the Soviets, the declarations of Tchitcherin, the mistakes of Petskovsky, the raid on Kollontay, and the new conservative trend of the Mexican government, plus Communist insults all over the world to the Mexican legations and the Mexican President-elect. One did not need to seek further. If Morrow's general policies promoted the drift apart of the two governments, I do not believe that Morrow had the slightest hand in the actual break itself. In fact he was eager for the United States itself to recognize the Soviet Union and toyed with the idea of being the first American Ambassador to Moscow. He liked hard nuts to crack.

The Mexican government showed too much spleen for this to have been merely a dutiful act. It now sought in every way, quite in violation of international precedent, to humiliate Makar and the Russians.

Presently another foreign office press statement declared that Makar was no longer recognized as a diplomatic representative and unless he left the country on the first steamer would be treated as any other foreigner.

Makar, his eyes at last opened, had to swallow the bitter pill. Not quite as soon as Mexico demanded, he packed up the Legation baggage and set out for Vera Cruz. Truskonov, the commercial attaché, had already pulled out, but his assistant was now left behind to wind up all business.

In Vera Cruz, Makar was placed under temporary arrest and his baggage seized. After various humiliations, he was permitted to proceed with two trunks containing his personal effects, but the Legation archives, some eleven trunks or so, were sent back to Mexico City to be pored over by the police and military in a hysterical red-hunt.

Makar sent me a very bitter telegram narrating what had happened in Vera Cruz, and from that and other reliable sources I reconstructed a picture of what had taken place. Colonel Johnson, American military attaché, confirmed to me the seizure of all Makar's records. I turned all this information over to Lloyd and Nutter.

The police also descended on the Soviet Legation and seized everything there. A clerk of the commercial department of the Legation had sold out to the Mexican authorities and for a long time had been peddling secret information to them. Now, the assistant commercial attaché was arrested; all Soviet goods, papers and whatnot were confiscated.

Shortly after this, the attaché's wife came to me in tears. She claimed the police had been maltreating him, spitting on his beard and committing other foul abuses to attempt to make him divulge information. She implored me to use my influence with high-up Mexican officials about it.

I felt sorry for his predicament, but if the diplomatic representative of the country to which the Soviet Union had turned over its affairs in Mexico was unable to get satisfaction, I would be in a pretty pickle meddling in the quarrel of too much angered sovereign nations. I suggested that she make the round

of the foreign news correspondents—nothing of course would be printed in the local papers—to see if any of them would care to cable the story.

After a week or ten days, he was released and went his way. Amtorg, the Soviet commercial agency in New York, sent a man down to try to wind up Soviet affairs in Mexico. Though he was an American citizen, he was at once arrested.

Alex Gumberg, adviser on Soviet affairs for the Chase National Bank and an intimate friend of Morrow, got the latter to act. The Amtorg man was released but had to leave Mexico at once without accomplishing anything. Some millions of dollars were tied up in goods, outstanding accounts, etc., a loss never recuperated.

So ended Soviet relations with Mexico.

MURDER FOR JESUS

AFTER MY RETURN FROM NICARAGUA, previously mentioned, I was invited to give five lectures at the National University of Mexico on Central America. Two very fine persons on the faculty that summer were Professor Edward Alsworth Ross of Wisconsin, author of many books on contemporary sociology, and Dr. Fernando de los Ríos, later a cabinet minister of the Spanish Republican government and now Ambassador at Washington.

Later that same year, I made a long horseback trip through Jalisco, still in an uproar because of the Cristero or Church rebels—this was before Morrow's settlement. It was a risky journey because of the great bloodthirstiness on both sides. The religious cause had attracted many wild bandit spirits who would have fought for any cause or no cause, and whose real interest was not the Church but the chance to pillage and kill. Despite this, they were abetted, often accompanied, by priests.

An attack by four hundred Cristero rebels had been made on a Guadalajara train, transporting a large quantity of gold bullion. The attackers were accompanied by priests and the entire train, except the steel Pullman, set on fire and many wounded and others trapped and burned alive. Several persons went crazy.

A few days after this tragedy, I pinned several scapulars under my shirt in case I was bagged by the rebels, and boarded the Guadalajara train for the scene of action. After riding horse-

back some weeks down in southwest Jalisco and seeing some fighting, I returned to Guadalajara.

At first glance Guadalajara is not a prepossessing place, but after a time one learns of its many beauties. It is full of aristocrats of the old days, large plantation owners with palatial residences, and no city in the republic has more beautiful hidden patio gardens. The climate is a spring song the year round, as fine as that of any city in the world.

I went around quite a bit with my old college friend, William Strobach, Westinghouse Electric engineer. Also, I saw quite a bit of a well-known inventor, who had retired wealthy and had built one of the finest residences in the city where he continued to make experiments. He had spent ten years of his life perfecting a steel lathe, a beautiful instrument.

His wife, a charming woman much younger than himself, had been a suffragette, whom he had originally heard speaking from a soap box on a public corner. Both had been in the terrible four-hour train-attack by the Cristeros, and it had cracked their nerves pretty badly.

I also saw quite a bit of the Maríns, the parents of Lupe Marín, wife of Diego Rivera, and her brother, a pre-med. student. They invited me to a *pozolazo*, a supper party with typical Jalisco dishes. There was a large crowd of young folk and much guitar playing and dancing. Lupe's sister was married to Carlos Orozco, the painter, and with them I frequently went out to the country club.

The famous Tapatías, the women of Jalisco, have the reputation of being the most beautiful in Mexico, and they deserve their reputation. I became quite enamored of one young lady until one day we went out to the country club to swim. Before even wetting her toes, she promptly marched up to the fifty-foot platform and dived off perfectly. I was not much of a swimmer those days, and her achievement cured my symp-

toms. With such a girl, I would inevitably have an inferiority complex all my days.

Often we also went out to Tlaquepaque, the pottery town, where we sat in the green sidewalk booths about the market place, drinking tequila and listening to the *mariache* orchestras, or to Zapopan, with its unusual colonial churches.

The American consul and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Dwyer, entertained me—very fine people. He was much the typical consul, very conventional and conservative and at the moment hysterically upset over the Jalisco mine-strikers, whom he saw only as a bunch of cutthroat Bolsheviks, whereas the hard-boiled mine-managers were angels in white robes. He sent alarming reports to the State Department, which gave out very misleading news reports. One of the mines involved, hell to work in because the veins were alongside of hot-springs about a mile deep, belonged to former Ambassador Gerard, which perhaps explained our official worry over this particular strike and the excessive pressure put upon the Mexican government. Since then the workers have been given proper safety appliances—according to law—and there has been little labor trouble.

With the consul lived the assistant consul, a nice boy, very dressy and sleeked up, who called the Dwyers “ma” and “pa.” Though pleasant and insinuating, he was something of a pharisaical snob, who despised the Mexicans as low trash. Later he went over the hill with consular funds as a result of gambling and other wild amusements. Ousted from the service in disgrace, he faced arrest for embezzlement should he ever return to the United States. He went from bad to worse, had a hard time of it. Later, in Mexico City, I used to lend him fifty centavos or a peso every now and then so he could eat.

In Mexico City a group interested in political and economical subjects used to gather regularly at the Lady Baltimore for lunch; sometimes we went out to the country for barbecues. Among those in the group were Miguel Mendizabal, the anthropologist, who had done splendid work; Francisco Zamora, a columnist on *El Universal*; Eduardo Villaseñor, who later occupied high positions in the finance department and became Consul General in New York; Montesinos, also a finance expert; Molina Enríquez, doing investigation in the statistical department; Silva Herzog, chief of the Statistical Department, later Minister to the Soviet Union; Tristán Marof, a Bolivian writer, who later came close to being executed in Bolivia.

One day, we got into a foolish discussion of whether or no *any* woman would be glad to marry Lindbergh; it was when he was courting Anne Morrow. The consensus of opinion was that *almost* any woman would. I suggested that we call in the first woman we saw and find out. We beckoned to one of the prettiest waitresses and posed the question to her.

She gave her head an angry toss. "Of course not!" Then after a thoughtful pause, she added, "Besides he wouldn't have me anyway."

I had several interesting sessions with Colonel Adalberto Tejeda, the dictator of Vera Cruz, later an unsuccessful candidate for the Presidency. He was fanatically anti-clerical. When once I called on him when he had been Secretary of State under Calles, with great glee he lifted the cover of a terra-cotta case on his desk to reveal a monk and nun in an obscene style of copulation.

He was a very brilliant man, full of original ideas, and very ambitious. But there was a streak of weakness in him. His body and face were flabby, and I had a feeling he would never

become President. At present he is Mexican Ambassador to Spain.

Among others I remember meeting, or whose acquaintance I renewed during that stay in Mexico or soon after, were Ferdinand Reyher, a short-story writer, now with the movies, and the world's best cook; George Seldes, then of the *Chicago Tribune*, who soon after wrote *You Can't Print That*; Anna Louise Strong, noted for her books on Russia and China; Ernest Gruening, former managing editor of the *Nation* who was working on his more than able *Mexico and Its Heritage* and later headed a new department under Ickes having jurisdiction over territorial possessions and who had personal charge of New Deal reconstruction efforts in Puerto Rico; Dr. Samuel Guy Inman, head of the Protestant missionary Committee on Conciliation with Latin America, professor at Columbia and editor of *Nueva Democracia*, who has recently written a fine book on Latin America; Morley, of the Carnegie Foundation, who was excavating ruins in Yucatán but had never bothered to learn Maya; Robert Redfield, who was living in Tepoztlán and doing a social-anthropological study of that village and who later wrote an excellent scientific book which formed the main basis for Stuart Chase's later agreeable popularization, the best seller, *Two Americas*; Judge Hand of New York, to whom Morrow introduced me at the Embassy; Dr. Monroe of the Columbia education department; Dr. Adolf Goldschmid, a German lecturer imported by Vasconcelos, who later founded an institute for Latin-American studies in Berlin and then was driven out of Germany to find a haven in Johnson's New School of Social Research in New York; Martha Graham, the famous dancer, a quiet, unassuming woman with deep currents; Mabel Dodge, renowned for her frank memoirs and her study of D. H. Lawrence, *Lorenzo in Taos*, also for her latest husband, the Indian Tony, whose conversational activities were mostly a

series of grunts and whose parlor trick was to beat on his little drum and yodel Indian songs; Katherine Anne Porter of *Flowering Judas* fame, at the time very ill with consumption; Hubert Herring, Protestant Missionary, running a sublimated tourist business, invariably doing good genially, and one of the most ingratiating and agreeable persons I know.

3

Anna Louise Strong was a grand woman.

I had met her father, a Protestant minister from Oregon, one of those truly angelic souls too good and fine for this mundane world, and of so rich and gentle a nature one could not help admiring and loving him; a small, generous, white-haired man almost timid in manner, but full of inner fire. He told me repeatedly about his marvelous daughter, "little Anne," soliloquized about her talents constantly. She would be coming to Mexico. Would I look after her and see that she got around?

I admired her writing, and I now pictured a small, almost timid soul, like himself. But when Anna showed up, she was a very large woman indeed, on the handsome, Junoesque order, with a big mane of fine hair touched with gray, large blue eyes with a slight glare, apple-red cheeks, a mighty stride and indefatigable energy. Anna, a modern woman in the best sense, accustomed to go her own way and get what she wants from life, did not especially need me or anybody else to take care of her.

I arranged several dinners for her, one at the home of Ernest Gruening and McLoughlin, an oil man with whom he was living.

Anna Louise told me a yarn about myself, peddled to her by the American Consul General, Mr. Weddel. I was merely amused. But when two other prominent visitors to Mexico told me the same yarn, I got hot under the collar that he should

use his official position to prejudice people against me by repeating lies for which he had no foundation. I had not even met the man.

As are so many of our diplomats abroad, Weddel was an old-school southerner, and he had married a millionairess. Quite out of sympathy with Morrow's good-will efforts, he went around knocking them in private. His yarn was: Mexico is being run by three pernicious Bolshevik American Jews: Ernest Gruening (now head of the Bureau of Territories and Dependencies in the Department of the Interior), Frank Tannenbaum (now professor at Columbia University), and Roberto Haberman, a labor man, and one other American, named Carleton Beals, who was probably a Jew also who had changed his name from Biehl. The last-named was the worst because he was in the direct pay of the Soviet Legation.

I wrote a letter addressed to the State Department, protesting against Weddel's misuse of his official position to scatter falsehoods of this type. In it I reported that so far as I knew I didn't have a drop of Jewish blood in my veins, that one of my ancestors had been an aide of Washington, another had been a Civil War officer, that all had come to this country back in the seventeenth century, but that in spite of this fact I did not hold the consul's cheap race prejudices, and I believed that no American official who derived his powers from American citizens should belittle our numerous citizens of Jewish blood. I categorically denied that I had any relations with either the Mexican government or the Soviet Legation beyond those made necessary for collecting journalistic information necessary in my profession.

I sent a copy of this letter to Weddel, stating that I regretted having to bother him with such a picayune matter, that I never took stock in peddled rumors, but this had been told me in identical words by three different reputable persons who did

not know each other. I would hold up the letter to the department, pending a simple written assurance from him that he had not made such remarks about me.

Presently I received a request from him to call at the consulate. I ignored this, since he could easily have sent me the statement I requested. Several of his friends then came to me to ask me to go to the consulate. I told them flatly I would not go until he sent me the disclaimer.

One, a painter, told me that he had been hired by Weddel to paint the consul's ancestors, though of most of them Weddel didn't even have photographs. The artist was sore because Weddel had not paid him as much as he had been led to expect and had put him off with a promise that later he would pay him more when he decorated his home in the South.

This was a delicious note of snobbism, and I told Weddel's voluntary emissary that I was putting a Mr. and Mrs. Meddle into a novel in which the portrait-painting incident would figure. I was told that Weddel exclaimed on hearing this that he would punch my head the first time he saw me.

Shortly after this, I received a notice to call at the consulate and renew my registration as an American citizen. This done, the girl clerk told me Mr. Weddel wished to speak to me.

"Tell your boss," I said, "that I don't care to see him without witnesses to our conversation."

Shortly after that I was pressed into service as an escort for some girl whose partner had canceled his date for a country club ball. Mr. Weddel was there, dressed up as George Washington, with a white peruke, a big fellow, over six foot he was. He ran up to a friend and said, "I hear Carleton Beals is here. I have to see him."

"Beals is at my table. Come over," said my friend.

But Weddel never showed up.

I finally sent the letter to the State Department, and copies

to the American Embassy, advising Mr. Weddel that I had done so.

The State Department replied that if my charges had foundation, action would be taken. Mr. Morrow called me out to the Embassy and asked me what the row was about. I told him my letter spoke for itself. Morrow was already nettled by Weddel's constant private criticism of his own efforts in Mexico and he told me, "Well, don't worry about it. He's a man who never learns anything. We'll promote him somewhere else far from here."

Shortly after, Weddel was ordered to Toronto, and perhaps not liking the climate, resigned from the service. Since then he has come back as a diplomat of high rank in South America.

4

New excitement was brewing in Mexico. Portes Gil was almost certain to be faced with a revolt of dissatisfied generals. But I had now been in the country four years, except for two trips to Central America and two very hurried journeys to the United States, and though I hated to miss anything, I wanted to spend some time in the United States and revisit Europe.

To help my travel funds, early in 1929 I went to the United States to lecture—an activity I loathe, but which many authors must engage in rather than write mystery stories or go Hollywood.

For a whole month my lectures were so close together that I spent only two nights in a bed, the rest of the time on Pullmans. I gave a series of five lectures to the League for Women's Peace and Freedom, spoke at the Philadelphia Labor Forum, the Philadelphia Women's University Club, Swarthmore University, at the Boston Open Forum, twice in Pittsburgh, at the men's and women's Civic Clubs in Cleveland, at John Haynes Holmes' Forum in New York, and numerous other places.

In my prior correspondence with the secretary of one women's organization, I detected a note of worshipful praise not strictly business. When I walked into the hall and introduced myself for the lecture, the young lady, fresh from college, a large healthy blonde a head taller than myself, gasped and moaned, "Oh, I thought you were tall and dark!"

At the Boston Open Forum, during the question time, a woman asked me, "Do you think there will be any more trouble in Mexico?"

As I had so definitely indicated this to be the case, I replied facetiously, "Madam, there will be a revolt tomorrow."

The uprising would hardly occur for another month or so, but what was my surprise to wake up in Philadelphia the next morning to see headlined: GENERAL ESCOBAR REVOLTS IN MEXICO.

At least one woman in this world should have great faith in me as a prophet.

I had met General Escobar, a very trim officer, with a much more professional and efficient military bearing than most self-made generals of the revolution, one of the fastest mobilizers in the army.

Right after the Gómez-Serrano revolt, which had resulted in the execution of both leaders, Escobar told me how he had captured General Gómez. Though one of the most blatant officers in the army, very much favored by the American Embassy, Gómez had shown the white feather and wept and begged for mercy. During the Gómez revolt one of the secretaries of the American Embassy used to get drunk in public cabarets and shout "Viva Gómez!" Only his position saved him from being slapped down. Now, when Escobar listened to Gómez' weeping and entreaties, he read him a severe lecture on the sacredness of the military code, the worst crime being disloyalty. Gómez had sullied the uniform he bore. Escobar then shot him.

But Escobar told me this so smugly that I said to myself,

you'll be the next one to sully your uniform. I was right. There was no excuse for his revolt.

The revolutionists gathered in a lot of swag, looting the bank and business of the north. Escobar scooted across the United States and hid himself in Canada where he has remained to this day.

Mr. Lester Markel, Sunday editor of the *New York Times* wanted me to do an article on the revolt. I had neglected to call on him when I arrived in New York, but he had learned that I was either in Philadelphia or Boston. In Philadelphia, returning to my hotel following an afternoon lecture, I found a note from the local *Times* representative requesting me to call Markel by long distance.

Having barely time to make my train, I dropped him a wire giving him my Pittsburgh address. A call was waiting for me when I arrived there. Markel wanted me to put twenty-five hundred words or so on the wire at once for the Sunday edition. I protested that I had a dinner engagement and after that a lecture for which I needed to prepare.

But insistent, he made me promise to do it, also a second article for the following week.

I tried to get the article started that afternoon, but it did not go well. I spoke at the Y.M.H.A. and got back to the house about eleven.

It was do or die, so I called Western Union to keep relays of messengers coming to the house and finished about three in the morning.

To my surprise, when I opened the paper Sunday, my article was not in it; instead, another article, incidentally a very capable one, by someone else. Nevertheless a check came through to me. I did not cash it.

My second article did appear and another check came. When I finally got back to New York, I offered Markel the check

for the first article. "I don't want money for an article that was not acceptable," I told him.

He advised me to keep the check. The article was good, he had merely felt the *Times* ought to give the rebels at least one week of grace.

Though I had not taken sides in my article or prophesied, but had merely analyzed the causes of the revolt and the forces involved, the obvious conclusion was that—barring some unforeseen contingency—the rebels were doomed to failure even before they started.

5

Meanwhile my lecturing continued. At one women's club, I was invited to the customary luncheon. The plump matrons spent the time telling me how this or that previous speaker, persons of eminence, had pinched her or her leg under the table, how this one had tried to kiss her in the hall, etc., etc. They pretended to be scandalized, but how they enjoyed it!

Never have I pinched any plump matron under the table, but if ever I be tempted, God give me the strength to resist!

At a women's club in the Mid-West, at the afternoon lecture, four or five men were present. One of them, husband of the president of the society, was head of a large coffee-distributing company. At a reception afterwards, he told me with a note of complaint that I had said little about Brazil where his company's interests were menaced by revolution. Then I knew why five hundred women had had to listen to a subject in which probably they were not interested—because a certain leading citizen in town was worried about his coffee business.

On one occasion, I spoke before a state teachers' federation in a small Mid-Western town. I arrived on the only possible train. One dingy, forlorn Main Street stretched before me, lined with dismal end-century red-brick buildings—and I had several

hours to kill. It was either sit in the railway station, walk, or go to a restaurant.

A bottle of cold beer that hot afternoon would have tasted marvelous, but in those prohibition days impossible even to think of in such a town. I had several cups of coffee in a fly specked restaurant, then, about twenty minutes ahead of time, walked leisurely over to the Odd Fellows' Hall where the Sessions were being held.

Not a soul was about. The auditorium was locked. No notice told of change of plans. Finally, on the third floor, I found two firemen, coats off, playing pool.

The convention had been moved into a large temporary tabernacle left behind by some recent Billy Sunday. Said tabernacle was far out on the edge of town, no taxi available.

Half-amused, I walked, but leisurely, under the hot sun over to the tabernacle, arriving about fifteen minutes late.

The place, with its narrow hard benches, sawdust over dirt and low roof, was a furnace, packed with perspiring teachers who every year are subjected to this sort of senseless "improvement" to satisfy the exhibitionism of professional Doctor of Education racketeers and inflated local politicians.

I was at once taken in tow by several plump but tough looking politicians, one of whom muttered darkly that I was late. Presently I was shooed on to the platform, with a gesture half command, half indifference. The audience stirred restlessly on their narrow hard boards, the dust stirred up in spirals about them.

The politico chairman made some flowery announcements with rather heavy humor that aroused no response, then said brusquely:

"Well, at last the speaker is here. We almost decided he wuzn't comin'. But he got here after all."

Nothing more, just this sharp tone of reproof. My name was not even mentioned.

The blood ebbed into my face and out again. It was merely the customary Boeotian manners of the uncivilized hinterland—in one of our wealthiest states—bad manners made worse by the attitude of the petty political Tsar who domineered these underpaid apostles of enlightenment under his thumb. I was not going to take it.

Outwardly keeping my temper, smiling blandly, I thanked him for his unusually gracious introduction—this aroused a slight snicker—then I spent a quarter of an hour leisurely explaining just why I was late, congratulating the committee of arrangements on its courtesy and its abilities, told an apt anecdote about a cheap Latin-American politician I had once met, and all in all fried the petty bosses of the gathering in oil.

In spite of the pleasure this gave me, it was one of the most deadly sessions I ever addressed. The teachers, undoubtedly among the most intelligent members of their respective communities, were there under duress, not voluntarily. In that sodden atmosphere, I am sure my talk was stodgy, and naturally my lecture agent did not receive a very flattering report.

At one Mid-Western university, two weeks before election time, as I spoke on our Latin-American policies, naturally Wilson, Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover all came in for some sharp comments. But I had committed *lèse-majesté* in that notable hall of freedom of speech and cultural integrity, particularly in criticizing Hoover and Coolidge, for I had landed in a Republican nest. And though my talk was quite non-partisan, the committee on arrangements, the secretary of which was an ex-gumshoe man of the Department of Justice, refused to pay my fee till pressure was brought.

Lecturing soon teaches one that most groups—there are fine exceptions and I apologize to the many fine and sincere persons

I have encountered—don't want to hear the truth or facts about anything; they get angry and upset. You can tackle anything but men's prejudices. You can fleece a man, trick him, get the best of him in a business deal, beat down his wages, ruin his reputation, and he will take it, often even admire the one who outwits him, the politician who gulls him, the boss who exploits him; but utter one word against his narrow prejudices, which usually he has merely parroted from his father before him, against his abject sense of conformity, his belief that nothing in the United States should be criticized even if it is wrong; in other words, deal with ideas, and he will rise up furious to smite you. He will be fawningly grateful if you set forth a few glowing generalities in fine rhetorical diction, preferably in the hazy piousness of Protestant sermons, tell many anecdotes, wear an interesting tie, and hand the lady chairman gone fat a flower and bow low over her hand when it's over. Then, my boy, you'll get a hand and be a success on the lecture platform.

VALLE-INCLAN

FOR A FEW WEEKS I ROAMED around Paris. I revisited the Louvre, wandered through the Montmartre, up the Sacré-Cœur, all through the twisted alleys of the Marais, re-echoing the footsteps of a thousand years, to Notre Dame, little knowing then that there Antonietta Rivas would kill herself, and haunted the book-sellers on the quai of the Seine.

For a time, when one first hits Paris, one's mind runs to food and wine; one gets a thrill hunting out new little places to eat. But after that the appetite flags before such superfine cuisine and begins to clamor for some plain old-fashioned cooking.

I investigated the Montmartre and the secrets of Pigale, "the one street in the world where men roll up and walk down." Introduction to that side of Paris was given me by the representative of a large news bureau, who took me to Zeli's, a quite glorious, inexpensive and foolish evening. I had something of a head the following day when I lunched with Harold Callendar of the New York *Times* bureau, one of the ablest correspondents in Europe. He was contemptuous of Paris night-life: just a gyp game for tourists; the real night-life was to be found in Berlin. Personally, I preferred the little cafés over in the students' quarter, full not only of genuine Bohemia and camaraderie but even if the price-tag saucers mounted up, the total bill did not come to much.

But Paris did not long sit well on my stomach. Ill-feeling toward Americans—though every Frenchman wished to gouge

them—was now all too apparent. The French, at least those with whom the casual visitor came in contact, were petty, disagreeable and greedy. I was eager to get on to more hospitable Spain and visit old haunts.

I boarded the swank Sud Express. My initial idea was to stop off in Hendaye to see Miguel Unamuno, the famous writer and philosopher, in exile there from the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, but decided it might prejudice my investigations in Spain proper. So I went on to San Sebastián, which I had never seen. The fashionable resort was largely abandoned. Hotel rates were cheap; and in this off season, with the diplomatic corps and the Court gone, the natural life of the town was more in evidence.

After about a week, I proceeded to Madrid. If I remembered Spain as a whole very warmly, Madrid itself carried many bitter memories. I had been poor and worried when there nine years ago. But the memory of all that was swept away the instant I arrived.

I sought out my old *pensión* overlooking a little plaza. Though it had been taken over by a mountainous peroxide blonde and her wraith of a husband, the rates all these years of booming prices and currency maladjustments had gone up exactly one peseta, or fourteen cents a day, for room and board, the total at current exchange rates being \$1.12 a day, actually a few cents less than I had paid nine years before.

This time I really got into the life of the city as I had not been able to do before. I soon haunted, not only the Grand Via *tertulias*, or café clubs, but also those on the more intimate Calle de Toledo where the peasants came to town. The *tertulia* is the real key to knowing the community life of the city, be it the bullfight crowd, the intellectuals, the military clique or any other activity or group.

The Café Regina does not differ essentially from other cafés

which cluster in the center of Madrid. It is located on the Calle de Alcalá, halfway between the Puerta del Sol—that great hub of national life, from which ten streets ray out to all parts of Madrid and the kingdom—and the Paseo del Prado, where stand the massive national postoffice and the incomparable museum. In style, it is midway between the older places—in which huge crystal chandeliers shimmer on mirror-walls and ceilings, on extravagant Baroque decorations above red plush wall seats—and those more modern centers, such as El Henar, which go in for inverted lighting and English panels.

Mingle with the ever vibrant throngs along the Calle de Alcalá, in the shade of the impressively atrocious end-century buildings. Gradually the cafés yield up their secrets. The red plush paradise near the Calle de Mayor is frequented by petty ranchers in black *boinas* and velvet jackets, whose means lift them above the plebeian swirl of the Calle de Toledo, yet whose dress and uncouth manners debar them from better haunts. Near by is the rendezvous of the bullfighters and their fans. Further down in the avenue, in the Lion d'Or and elsewhere, congregate, *en grande tenue*, military officers in chocolate-soldier uniforms, and high bureaucrats, gravely stroking gray goatees. Another café is a vociferous students' center, another is the hangout of the Republicans; a back-street café harbors the Socialists, and a pretentious place on Conde de Peñalver, the young bloods among the aristocrats.

From wall to chandelier and back, bounds talk, magnificent talk. Kings are throned and dethroned. Empires fling cohorts to far colonies; empires are shaken down. Here are the final juries of human achievement: reputations—political, literary, musical, dramatic—receive their final appraisal. More than one poet has been made or unmade by the Last Judgment of the Madrid cafés. A clever word pierces the bombast of a false reputation: the *bon mot* re-echoes, in chuckles that spell ruin, all along the

Alcalá. The test of this audience is more arduous and important for a bullfighter than the enraged horns in the ring. Here, too, in those Primo de Rivera days of official news suppression, was the secret grapevine of rumor, ideas and hope.

Peeping into the Café Regina any evening, one could espy at the crowded tables elegantly gowned French and Spanish ladies of adventurous antecedents. Yet this café was the pivot of the most significant literary life of Madrid. Martín Luís Guzmán (the Mexican Boswell of the whirlwind of the Chihuahua deserts, Pancho Villa, whom Guzmán described in his *The Eagle and the Serpent*, and novelist of Mexican revolutionary events as in his *The Shadow of the Chief*) let me into the secret.

Don Martín had taken me to visit the Carcel Modelo, at that time overflowing with students unconvinced that Primo de Rivera had direct telephone connections with God. We hoped to see Ramón de Valle-Inclán, Spain's greatest living novelist, under arrest for criticizing the dictatorship at some dinner gathering; but he had been released that morning after two weeks of serious illness. Don Martín then took me one night at seven o'clock to the Café Regina, past all the tables of gay ladies and around a bend in the rear, to a long, quiet, isolated table where were gathered a group of local celebrities.

2

At the head of the table sat Valle-Inclán, more than ever a hero now, after his imprisonment. His slight, one-armed body was erect; his bearing was alert; his massive head was thrown back. He was completely unconscious of his sixty-odd years. His long, scraggly, gray beard, flowing down over his chest, came right out of classic mythology. A true son of Cronus, he seemed: one arm already devoured, great tooth-like scars on his neck. By some wiry instinct he escaped the gory celestial appetite in order to assert his own godhead. A mane of

gray hair flowed over his collar; his Galician head rose with a high sweep of brow above thick black eyebrows, broad as thumb smudges; above brown eyes burning from behind horn-rimmed glasses; above an incredibly long, large, slightly humped nose.

As he talked—for no reposeful portrait does Don Ramón justice—his lean fingers combed his long beard; or sometimes they stopped, clutching the strands in frozen dramatic personification of some intense memory. Then, he reminded me of Michelangelo's *Moses*, there in San Pietro in Vincolo, staring over far spaces in a sort of smoldering fury; and I looked for the two tiny horns. Almost, I am convinced, I saw them on Don Ramón's head.

Those whiskers of Don Ramón's were like aerial roots, nourishing the trunk of his ideas, spreading into the flower of the most fantastic and delightful conversation it has ever been my lot to hear. Then his eyes *lived*. They held boundless compassion—and I could understand why old women selling newspapers and beggars and queer street-folk clutched Don Ramón's arm when he passed, to ask his advice. For if Goethe talked with coachmen, Don Ramón talked with everybody whose life has been distorted by trouble. Compassion—but also the devil-may-care gleam of the satyr, the mockery of the devil's advocate, the sharp blaze of passion. Poetry and sarcasm, beauty and sophistry, fantasy and dialectic, clashed their cymbals in his nimble talk. The novelist was never more brilliant than when crushing his controverters in support of an utterly absurd theory; for he had the magic gift of flashing the air-drawn dagger and making Alnaschar dreams more real than reality. I should have liked to have matched his conversational pyrotechnics with those of Coleridge or Huneker. Younger literary groups had sprung up: but nearly all are off-shoots of the various *tertulias* of Valle-Inclán, where not since Goldsmith and Boswell gath-

ered about Samuel Johnson, had court been held over such a kingdom of Micomicom. The Pierrot imagination of Gómez de la Serna held forth in the charmingly shabby Piombo café under a gorgeous black painting by that little-known, half-mad genius, Solana. Pérez Ayala had another group. Ortega y Gasset, another. Jacinto Benavente, too comfortably endowed long to linger in Bohemia, had gone his successful way toward the Nobel Prize. Pío Baroja had split off to solitary seclusion. Yet few of the notable intellectuals, painters, musicians and artists but had at some time or other been under the direct influence of the Valle-Inclán *tertulia*. He was long the terror of the academicians, who for many years warned their students to shun him as a pestilence.

3

In the gathering to which Guzmán introduced me at that time were Díez Canedo, a poet and Spain's leading dramatic critic, graced with a generous and tender irony (I was to see him again in Havana, years later); Juan Echevarría, the successful portrait painter, hopelessly, persistently remonstrating at Don Ramón's too caustic strictures about people and events; Juan José Domenichina, author of the humorous *La Túnica de Neso* (later President Azaña's secretary); Dr. Luis Hoyo, professor and anthropologist; Alvarez del Vayo, left-wing Socialist, at that time correspondent for *La Nación* of Buenos Aires, later a ramrod of the Republic, Ambassador to Mexico, representative at Geneva, Minister of War during the Franco revolt; Manuel Azaña, former editor of *La Pluma* and of the suppressed weekly *España*, one of the ablest liberal journals in Europe (later he became President of the Republic). Among those who rarely came to the *tertulia*, but were close to the group, were Luis Ariquistáin, whom I had previously met in Mexico, known for his books *Spain in the Crucible* and *The Agony of*

the Antilles (a brother-in-law of Alvarez del Vayo, he is now Minister in Paris); Indalecio Prieto, then editor of *El Liberal* of Bilbao, financed by a wealthy shipbuilder (later he became Minister of Finance and Secretary of War); Alvaro de Albornoz and Marcelino Domingo of the Alianza Republicana, both of whom later became ministers under the Republic. Present at the Regina were journalists, poets, a banker, business men, painters. Over cups of coffee or manzanillo wine we discussed literature, politics, bullfights, sex, travel, Paraguay, the Carlist wars, life in general. Among us circulated the secret *Hojas* of Spain's exiled philosopher, Miguel Unamuno, or the latest secret manifesto of the students, at the moment being charged down in the streets with drawn sabers and dragged off to jails all over the land.

With Echevarría, I went to one of the police stations to see his son, a student, who was rounded up—a fine chap, not half as upset by the occurrence as his father. Later we took up a subscription at the Regina to pay the boy's fine.

Those were troubled moments, dark moments, for Spain when I was there in 1929. Everyone was gloomy. Few saw any ray of hope in the situation. None believed that the factions could be united to accomplish anything. In her recent book *Spanish Prelude*, Jenny Ballou catches much of the ennui and disillusion and uncertainty of that time, its complete intellectual bankruptcy. She and her husband, Harry Ballou, correspondent for one of the American news associations, were about the only Americans I saw in the city those days. With them I went to see a number of plays.

Pessimistic and fatalistic, the Regina group took its politics with much verbal fury but otherwise with a shrug. The Primo de Rivera dictatorship was tightening up.

When the members of the *tertulia* once asked me what could be done, I told them: "Import one good Mexican general and

Primo de Rivera won't last a week. He's a straw man and needs only one good push."

None of those in the *tertulia* ventured to prophesy that within twenty months not only would Primo be out but that the King himself would have fled into exile, or that the quiet, sage Azaña would leap into the head of the nation, or that they themselves would play leading rôles in the overthrow and assume the highest posts of the land.

4

In those days of talk rather than action, Valle-Inclán was the real center of the group. Now he discourses of the huge white butterflies of Paraguay, of jungles veiled with enormous dew-drenched cobwebs, spun by enormous spiders—cobwebs which have provided the design for those snow-white Paraguayan hammocks, "so supple, so fluid, so luxuriously ample as to seem to have life in and for themselves." Or it is the Mudéjar art of Mexico, where colored tiles have advanced beyond their Plateresque and Manuelesque decorative importance to fulfill an integral structural function. Or he is narrating excruciating absurdities of the Seville exposition, then the pet concern of the dictatorship. Or he is razzing the local critics who are bragging chauvinistically how much richer is Spanish than English—because it has a larger vocabulary [sic] and because of the philosophic possibilities suggested by the Spanish mystics. "Bah!" exclaims Don Ramón. "Quantity means nothing; if Spanish is superior, it is only because of its elegance, its rhetorical extravagance, its music, its depth, its subtlety. As for the mystics, since they twisted words out of their true meaning to express the inexpressible, they prove nothing."

Pío Baroja, Don Ramón tears limb from limb: the man has no style and can't construct a novel; Pérez Ayala has ideas, but is a barbarous writer; Blasco Ibañez is a charlatan for salesgirls,

hence his great success in the United States. But Unamuno, he averred, had boundless moral courage; and his writing is winged by the strongest pinions of the Spanish tongue—sublime rhetoric. The work of Benavente, if sometimes mediocre, in the aggregate has proven him a genius. Zola is often full of bourgeois monotonies, but the man's passion for justice, as in the Dreyfus Case, has lifted nearly all of his writing to greatness. Ibsen, he loathes. Shaw, he appreciates only for his genial irony and occasional Celtic perversities. Anatole France is too lackadaisical. Don Ramón can quote entire pages from Cervantes: there had been no true Spanish stylist since Cervantes until the arrival of Ruben Darío, the Nicaraguan, whose poems Don Ramón knows by heart.

Valle-Inclán never tires of talking about Ruben Darío, who was a personal friend and whose childish waywardness forever captured the novelist's imagination. He tells innumerable personal anecdotes of the exiled poet, who flung himself against the windmills of the world and slaughtered prosaic sheep. Two things, according to Valle-Inclán, initiated the modern revival of Spanish letters—the drubbing given the country in the Spanish-American War, which jolted the provincial nation from its opiate dream of greatness; and Ruben Darío, who restored the real music of the Spanish tongue to its literature and smashed the moss-grown pomposity and pedantry which has ruled since the death of Cervantes. Of the debacle of ninety-eight and the coming of Darío were born Azorín, Clarín, Benavente, Blasco Ibañez, Pío Baroja, Unamuno, Alzaña, Arikistaín—and himself.

"When did you seriously begin to write?" I asked Don Ramón.

"Quite accidentally. I was looking for abandoned copper mines in Extremadura, which had been deserted when the old methods of refining had made them unprofitable. But in recent

years, the new cyanide process—" and he launched into a technical description.

"But how did you come to go in for copper mining?"

"To raise funds for the Carlist plot." Thereupon, Don Ramón described the plot, the rifles, how they were concealed, why plans failed. I never did find out when and how Don Ramón began writing. (His first volume, *Femeninas*, was published in 1895; his first verse, *Aromas de Leyenda*, in 1907.) But I might have learned much about the Carlist War, if my memory ran to such things. Anyway, it is all in his books. The Carlist War attracted many novelists: Galdós in his *Episodios*; Pío Baroja in his *Memorias de un hombre de accion*; Unamuno in his *Paz en la guerra*. But Valle-Inclán is the novelist par excellence of the Carlist War, not that he ever bothered too much about its political aspects; but it made a magnificent frame for his spirit of adventure, real and literary; for his lyric romanticism; and it gave adequate expression for his great love for his native life in Galicia, where the plots center.

5

Don Ramón was born in Galicia, a province long burlesqued in Spain for its uncouthness, its lack of culture, but the one place of the Peninsula where Celtic fancy has never died out. Very provincial, its people are close to humble realities. Its women are magnificent in physique, with red-apple complexions. It is a place of much rain, and Valle-Inclán, as one knows from his novels, long listened to rain's insistent melancholy pattering on the zinc sashes of the northwest countryside—like the ticktacking of some supernatural typewriter, he describes it. The novelist smelled the dampness of his stone house; the odor of old wood and cellar-stored apples—there is a humid richness in his style. He loves landscapes, and the sonorous sweep of his Castilian phrases ever leaps to far horizons. He has used classic

Spanish as no other modern Spanish writer has. And so these Carlist and Galician novels are classically simple. The characters are a picturesque multitude, noisy, life-boisterous, spontaneous with color and song—the villagers, the beggars of Galicia, elevated, through intense realism rivaling D'Annunzio's *Tales of Pescara*, to an aesthetic level, yet with none of the Russian somberness. (Spaniards cannot take poverty seriously; rags but intensify their innate dignity.) Caballeros, hidalgos, caudillos, aristocrats, clericals, nuns, fishermen—the life of Galicia is here, told in sonorous periods. I can see Don Ramón stroking his Jupiter beard as I read *La Guerra Carlista* . . . “Everything may be remedied in his life except death. . . . In war, the cruelty of today is the clemency of tomorrow. . . . Unfortunately, in war the most important personage is the devil. . . . That old beggar, trembling beneath her long full cape, seemed made of earth; and the flight of the bats and sound of the bells that tolled for death, heightened the desolation of that aged shadow who walked quaveringly, aided by a staff, along a twilight path, behind a funeral.”

It is difficult to fill in the gaps of Don Ramón's life: he himself is too interested in ideas and scenes and dramatic episodes ever to linger long on a personal theme. Everyone swears he was born with his beard. Sometime or other he descended on Madrid and stormed the *tertulia* of the Café Madrid, a place since destroyed to make way for the Crédit Lyonnaise. Here someone has remembered him making passes with his cane, explaining one of his notorious duels, much to the alarm of neighboring tables and passing waiters. In the Café Madrid were Camilo Bargiello, also from Galicia; Godoy, with a Musset haircut; Jacinto Benavente, with devilish mustaches, bald pate, constantly chewing on a cheroot; Ruben Darío, little eyes under fleshy lids, like an automatic Buddha, constantly exclaiming, “Admirable! Admirable!”; Martínez Sierra, the dramatist;

Luis Bello, the writer and educator, who in later days remade the educational map of Spain; González Blanco, the word-shoveling, subsidized biographer and critic; Gómez Carrillo, the inexhaustible romanticist. From the Café Madrid the reunions passed to the Café de Levante on the Calle de Arenal, which, writes Ricardo Baroja, "had more influence in contemporary art and literature than a pair of universities and academies." From there the center changed to the Café Regina, where it survived under the genial despotism of Valle-Inclán in spite of the subsequent shift of the rest of the clientele to include the Parisian demimonde.

Valle-Inclán, on occasions, vanished from public gaze while he toiled on a new *obra*; on occasions he disappeared from Madrid on long voyages—to Paris, where he flew over the battlefields as a war correspondent; to the Americas, to Portugal, Africa, the provinces, Italy. With a divine sense of *tomar el pelo*, of kidding his hearers, his grandiose exploits were never told twice in the same vein or with the same dénouement. Gómez de la Serna once wrote a pamphlet entitled, *The Thousand and One Ways That Valle-Inclán Lost His Arm*.

6

If Galician life provides Valle-Inclán's basic strength, the Americas have enriched his style, his knowledge, his love of the bizarre; they had given him memorable characters such as *Tirano Banderas* (see *The Tyrant*, recently published in English by Henry Holt); and in his *Sonata* he has painted Niña Chole, the cruel, sweet mestiza, like a cloying insidious perfume, the girl whom the Marqués de Bradomín (that notable study of a Don Juan who is Catholic yet Voltairian, and enamored of remote places and ancient times) found in the ruins of Tuxpán, mantled in a silk scarf, dressed in an embroidered sacred huipil, there in a setting of carved stones, beside golden sands, palm

trees, Indians, mulattoes with machetes, and muletrains of silver.

In *La Lámpara Maravilosa*, American memories also gloss. "The Creole woman of the pampas," he writes, "owes her soul, embalmed in silence, to the vastness of the plain; and if any emotion awakes pagan rhythms in her, it is because of the balsam which burns on the Spanish tongue in a southern sun." His *La Pipa de Kif* and *La Tienda del Herbolario* are aromatic storehouses of American colors and perfumes—especially the exotic. Now it is tropical Jalapa, luxuriating among massed vegetation, or Campeche, with its limestone azure shores of bursting surf, or Tlaxcala, seen through a veil of marihuana dreams. Above all, Valle-Inclán hates Argentina and loves Mexico. Mexico, for him, is the Esther among nations. "Two nations are in your breast"—the old struggle of the Indian race against the conquering *encomenderos*, the exploiters, and he adds: "You will realize your destiny when the two bloodstreams are united." Valle-Inclán loves in America its pathetic vitality, its heat and wrath, its combativity, its immense affirmation of sorrow, its hunger for death—south of the Rio Grande.

It would take too long to narrate Don Ramón's amusing life as an actor, part deliberate training for his brief effort at dramatic writing: *Voces de Gesta* (Heroic Voices), a tragedy; *La Marquesa Rosalinda*, a farce; *Cuento de Abril* (April Story), a poetic drama; *La Cabeza del Dragón* (Dragon's Head), a children's comedy. *La Lámpara Maravilosa* is a great metaphysical drama in verse between absolute dynamism and the eternally static, in which Bradomín, the principal protagonist, discourses magnificently, at the crises of his life, in four different settings. Not for the stage, but it is dramatic art.

Valle-Inclán's verse is more preciouslly rhymed than that of any other Spanish poet. He discards the old loose vowel rhyme and chooses exact feminine rhymes, accepting all the innova-

tions of Darío and going beyond them. Writes Díez Canedo of the novelist's poetry:

"Above all, the poetry of Valle-Inclán is not superficial. Behind every evocation, something is hidden. The words do not exhaust the sensation. No one will stop merely with the image the poet conjures up, because this image brings with it an ineffable train, a complexity of suggestions. This, and his tendency to unite in one verse many qualities derived from the other arts, modulating it, modeling it, giving it tonal depth, converts him at once into one of the subtlest representatives of symbolism, even more than Ruben Darío himself, for Valle-Inclán is more consistent. Symbolism, with him, does not confine itself to the nostalgia of mysticism, but at times reveals a play of humor, as in a Gothic cathedral, where beneath the spiritual uplifted spires pointing heavenwards, appears, of a sudden, the laughter of a gargoye."

From Valle-Inclán's four novels, the *Sonatas* of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter (centering upon the adventures of Bradomín), Don Ramón passes on to the novels of Galicia: *Aguila de Blasón* and *Romance de Lobos*, where he details the rude, feudal strength of the Galician lords, finally subjected by a Catholic queen. Then come his classic Carlist War novels, more simple and direct. Here, there is a powerful eruption of life, of reality, of living history. In *Divinas Palabras* in picaresque form he gives us the thronging on the roads, the beggardom, the superstitious witches, adventurers, cantina crowds, fiestas, public fairs. Here less preoccupied with Spanish feudal life and its sham glories, he pierces the realities of the lower levels of Spanish society with a grim fantastic joy.

Luces de Bohemia, which reflects the first difficult days of Don Ramón when he arrived in Madrid scarcely knowing where to lay his head, is full of majestic tolerance of human way-

wardness, hatred of power without knowledge, love of cage, caprice and the magnificent gesture, of that recklessness which suddenly, unaccountably takes hold of tame lives ; twists them fiercely into violence, bravery, preposterous violation of conventionalities.

7

Don Ramón was too independent of new literary fads to receive sensational acclaim. He was, like Cervantes, too intensely Spanish to be loved by his contemporaries or properly understood abroad. His incisive wit and sarcasm made him many enemies. He printed his own books to avoid being robbed by the unprincipled Spanish publishers, and, though ridiculed and reviled by the local press, little by little won himself a name on three continents. Though not a crusader, he was utterly fearless. He helped found the Ateneo, that center of intellectual light of Spain, and later was jailed by Primo Rivera for trying to prevent the Dictator's efforts to destroy its purposes and subordinate it to the régime.

Gómez de la Serna writes of him:

He enters into the houses of stone and into the huts of the village. On the pretext of resting and slaking his thirst, he listens to what passes in them. He knows equally well the story of the beggar and of the wealthy colonial who married a young girl and was killed by a secret poison.

The late afternoons of great panoramas rule in his work, and he sees there how on his return home he slackens his step a bit in marvel. In his work are seen vast beaches in the sands of which remain, when the tide recedes, only the print of his feet.

Don Ramón, in the midst of great nature, is the astrologist of flowers, of echoes of things which pass by very far off; and he knows whether they are phantoms or an overwhelming reality.

He is dead now. So is the romantic, exciting Spain of the tales and of his life. The new Spain, which he saw must

and which he did his part in creating, is fighting for its life. Don Ramón, I know, would have preferred to have lived on just a little longer and to have died on the barricades defending it.

THEIR BLOOD CRIES OUT

ANOTHER OUTSTANDING CHARACTER of the Valle-Inclán *tertulia*, whom I came to know well and whose home I visited, was Manuel Azaña, who later became President of the Republic. He was one of the best-informed leaders I have ever met anywhere, especially regarding the inner details of French and Spanish affairs, though no part of Europe was a closed book to him. At that time, however, he was not yet an outstanding figure.

In the establishment of the Republic he played a leading rôle. This change in the political life of the nation gave him his chance.

A quiet, bespectacled man, Azaña is modeled after the canny Cavour more than the idealistic Mazzini. Though a fine literary stylist, something of a poet, a strong speaker, and a dynamic head of the left-wing republicans, though he has led two revolts since I saw him in 1929, he has never been so much the crusader as a clever judge of men and events—practical, forceful. Great caution, quickness at the wheel, a keen eye and tireless alertness—these are the traits Azaña was later to use in guiding the storm-tossed Spanish state down the swift torrent let loose in the Peninsula's life.

Azaña certainly was one of the wisest members of our group. All respected him. Not so brilliant as Alvarez del Vayo, not so imaginative or temperamental as Valle-Inclán, not so cocky and bitter as Albornoz, he understood the actual mechanism of political and social forces better than any of them. Without

being at all pompous, he had the measured forceful utterance and cold objectivity that seem to characterize the so-called statesmen of the world and which inspire universal confidence. "Hard as the dry rocks of Birhuela, his native soil," is one Spanish description of him.

At that time, Azaña, though with quite a literary and legal reputation, was just a petty bureaucrat in the Department of Justice, and was apparently marking time under the dictatorship, but actually working for its downfall. Other Liberal and Republican leaders far outshone him in the public eye. To a small circle, though, he was known as a wise and capable man and as a student of military affairs. Back in 1911 during a sojourn in Paris on a government pension, he made an intimate study of the French military system and published a book about it. He also contributed capable correspondence to the newspapers under the pseudonym of Martín Piñol.

Azaña was born January 10, 1882, in Alcalá de Henares, twenty-one miles north of Madrid, a famous place in the heart of New Castile where were also born Catherine of Aragón and Miguel Cervantes, the author of *Don Quixote*. Later he was to return there and weep over the destruction by Franco's artillery. Left an orphan, Azaña was reared by well-to-do relatives and before he was twenty had finished his law course in the famous María Cristina school in the Escorial. There he must have often descended the long marble passageway to the vault of black and gold tombs where rested the bones of the past monarchs of Spain and have looked upon the marble coffin, already embossed with the solid gold letters of Alfonso XIII, the actual monarch, destined apparently never to repose there. But the young Azaña, although already imbued with hazy Republican beliefs, could hardly have imagined that he would be the one to drive the King into exile. There in the Escorial Azaña acquired the stern

discipline of the Augustine fathers. His doctorate was taken under the notable Francisco de los Ríos in Madrid.

On his return from France, he associated himself with the Ateneo, that liberal institute of learning which more than all else has kept medieval Spain in touch with the modern world thought. There he soon proved himself a keen polemicist. He was named secretary, a post he held for many years.

During 1919-20 Azaña again lived in Paris, then returned to found *La Pluma*, Spain's leading modernist literary review. It was contributed to by Benavente, Valle-Inclán, Ortega y Gasset, Gómez de la Serna, Unamuno, Ayala, Díez Canedo, and most of the outstanding writers. Two years later, Azaña founded *España*, a sort of *New Republic* journal, which under his editorship became one of the most illustrious liberal weeklies of Europe. It was finally suppressed by Primo de Rivera.

Azaña, disillusioned, took a conventional post in the Department of Justice, apparently a conformist to the régime, but unbeknown to his staid associates, engaged in secret revolutionary labors against the dictatorship and against the monarchy. He contributed numerous articles under a nom de plume to leading French publications on international and Spanish affairs, on the monarchy and the Primo de Rivera régime, powerful arraignments of corruption and incapacity. Soon he founded the *Acción Republicana*.

Azaña's own literary achievements have been considerable. Besides much journalistic output and his treatise on the French military system, his more literary effort, *The Garden of the Friars*, first published in *La Pluma*, is exquisite prose. His *Life of Don Juan Valera*, the famous novelist, won him the 1926 National Prize for Literature. In 1930 he published *Crown*, also the one-act play *The Night Watchman*, presented by the Xirgú Company in Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid with good

stage success. It had been translated into Italian, German and French.

Shortly after I was seeing him in 1929, he was obliged to go into hiding, but published *Pens and Words*, a collection of articles from Spanish and French magazines, a book chosen as "the best of the month." He also brought out *Three Generations of the Ateneo*, a record of the activities of the enlightened institution for which he had labored so many years, a record in strange contrast to the blundering and benighted dictatorship then ruling Spain.

He has also made important translations—Borrow's *The Bible in Spain* and various works by Chesterton and Prosper Mérimée, choices indicative of his own intellectual characteristics: he delights in paradox, and he loves the hard classic prose of Mérimée. His translation of Borrow's work is stylistically superior to the original.

His official duties, the stress and storm of politics in which he has been so actively engaged, have not halted his pen. Recently he published *Don Quixote and Other Essays* and shortly before the recent revolt, *My Rebellion in Barcelona*, in which he proved his innocence of charges of disloyalty to Spain brought against him by the Gil Robles régime. His status as a statesman, however, has now obscured his importance as a contemporary literary figure.

2

Martín Luís Guzmán, who went out of his way to help me meet people in Madrid, is one of the finest human beings I know. Besides his capable books, he contributed articles on Spanish affairs to the important publications throughout Latin America, and though a Mexican, hence a foreigner, had made a definite niche in Madrid journalistic circles.

Very close to Azaña, later he became the most intimate brain-

truster of the Republican régime. Azaña put him in charge of *El Sol*, the largest pro-government daily, where, as editor, he added to his journalistic laurels, defended Azaña and the Republic against its numerous enemies, and turned out the liveliest paper in Spain.

Those days, I interviewed the leaders of all political factions. Since then the Conservative and Liberal leaders have mostly gone into the discard, their places being taken by Republicans and radicals, or the new crop of fiery Fascist and militant monarchists, such as the younger Primo de Rivera, who was executed after the revolt broke out.

Alvarez del Vayo, one of the most brilliant men in the Valle-Inclán *tertulia*, was also very helpful to me. As correspondent of *La Nación* and with handsome offices on Conde de Peñalver, at that time, before the Primo dictatorship succeeded in getting him discharged and he was forced into hiding, he had entrée everywhere.

He and the well-known Ariquistaín had married two Swiss girls, sisters, who had done a great deal to liberate Spanish women from their medieval chains and to help them take a part in public affairs. They were active in the famous "Women's Club." In the nine years since I had been in Spain, the change was marked. Women could now walk down the streets unaccompanied, with little danger of being insulted. They could even appear in the afternoon alone in many cafés, and in certain others, accompanied by escorts, at night.

Alvarez del Vayo told me of his difficulties in getting married. Nine years before, two friends of mine had met in Spain to get married and, not being Catholics, found they could not do so: The British minister being absent, they had to make a special trip clear to Gibraltar. Now, in 1929, though Church and State were still unseparated—the Church receiving large

subsidies from the public taxes—a few more liberal deputies had forced the adoption of a civil marriage law.

The Church promptly threatened those who so married, or any official who performed the ceremony, with eternal damnation. Alvarez was one of the first to take advantage of the new law. It was no path of roses. The judge demanded more and more papers, higher and higher fees, quite beyond what the law stipulated; the marriage had to be postponed week after week. Months passed by.

Finally, as he had to go abroad, Alvarez laid down the law to the judge, demanded an end of the nonsense. The judge actually dropped on his knees and burst into tears, imploring Alvarez not to make him celebrate the marriage and thus lose his immortal soul. Alvarez was inflexible, and the judge quickly chose—not his immortal soul but his job.

Such incidents help explain some of the recent tribulations of the Church in Spain.

Alvarez, quick, volatile, a swift personality, full of fire and energy, assisted me greatly. Later when he had been forced off *La Nación* and was in hiding, he wrote me to try to find him some connection with American publications. I at once wrote him that I would make a real effort, and I queried a number of newspapers and magazines. But before anything tangible came of my endeavors, the Republic was born, and Alvarez had been appointed Ambassador to Mexico, where I again saw him. After the departure of Ambassador Morrow, he became easily the outstanding personality of the diplomatic corps. Since then he has become one of the bulwarks of the Republic, and is still a member of the cabinet under the Negrín government.

3

Indalecio Prieto, leader of the right-wing Socialists, was having trouble also under the dictatorship. Not at the moment in good health, he had been taking the sulphur baths for neuritis, and though he was feeling pretty miserable when I first interviewed him in his hotel in Madrid, his sense of humor had not vanished. He told me how he had been fined a thousand pesetas for publishing a picture of the niece of the Pope at a cocktail party with her legs crossed and showing most of all she had, and beneath that, the latest order of the Pope regarding the proper length of women's dresses and sleeves.

"Think of it," Prieto said mournfully, "five hundred pesetas a leg. I don't think any woman's leg is worth that much to look at—or otherwise."

Prieto was an authority on the I. T. and T. phone contract with the government, which he considered a very iniquitous arrangement. He gave me a copy of the contract, published in one of Unamuno's *Hojas*, a pretty high-binder affair, and data on the manner in which it was celebrated and other juicy details. Prieto assured me that as soon as a decent régime ever came into power in which he had any part, this contract would be voided and the rights of the Spanish republic re-established.

When, under the Republic, he became Minister of Finance, he did begin an onslaught on the I. T. and T. and this contract, but soon backed down in the face of American diplomatic representations and made no further effort to carry out his previous pledges.

But there is no denying that he has been one of the most capable and energetic of the ministers of the Republic, with great organizing capacities. Today, more than anyone else, he is the key man in the government. To him is owed the full development of Spain's war industries, particularly aviation, to

carry on the fight against Franco; Prieto, more than anyone else, unified military operations, and if final victory emerges it will be in great part due to his efforts.

The left Socialist leader, Largo Caballero, at that time holding a lucrative official post in Geneva, an appointee of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship, visited Madrid, but impressed me very unfavorably as a weak narrow man. Since then he is supposed to have read Marx and Lenin and become a simon-pure apostle, and came to be touted as the wise future leader of a coming 100 percent workers' republic in Spain. I doubt if such a workers' republic would be worth much if led by a man willing to accept a fat bureaucratic post under the *opéra bouffe* Fascism of Primo de Rivera and keep his mouth shut, but who later made so much consistent trouble for the new Republic during its unsettled early days, and who more recently has flirted with the P.O.U.M., Trotskyites and Anarchists who have been responsible for senseless revolts behind the lines. Caballero's craven conduct in running away from Madrid at its most critical moment without even advising the head of the army beforehand, at a moment of crucial disaster, even trying to keep the head of the army in the dark until after he had skipped out, did not at all surprise me. He did, as it turned out, serve his purpose during the early period of the present revolt of Fascists and Moors, but I was glad when he was relegated to a more subordinate position. It was regrettable that he could not then give at least as much co-operation to the present government, struggling to save Spain from foreign invasion and its age-old enemies, as he did to the unsavory Primo dictatorship.

How much more admirable has been the course of Alvarez del Vayo, who, though he belonged more or less to the same left faction as Caballero, never compromised with the Primo dictatorship, who has been loyal to the principles of the Re-

public, who today is in an effective position and is utilizing all his talents to save the day rather than plotting partisan politics or seeking personal power.

I did see Bestiero, another right-wing Socialist leader, a smooth-tongued opportunistic politician, very beautifully tailored, sleek and perfumed, whose offices were suavely and richly furnished. He posed as an aesthete and was surrounded with effeminate youths who spoke in reverential whispers.

Albornoz, a leader of the left-wing Republicans, was a man of real caliber, a scholar and a forceful thinker. He received me in his library, filled with books from floor to ceiling, and invited me to come there and make use of them at will. His leading defect for the moment nonplused me when I saw him a second time at a reception given by a new publishing firm in which Arikustain was interested. I greeted him cordially, but he snapped out something surly and turned his back on me. Alvarez del Vayo, when I mentioned this, said that one could never tell how Albornoz would act; his friends overlooked that. Although he did not strike me as being much of a diplomat, he is now in an important diplomatic post abroad; certainly he is one of the most brilliant and loyal men of the present government.

4

I met quite a few of the student leaders and visited some of them in jail. They were active at the time, and several of their demonstrations had been ridden down by Primo's cavalry. Their last engagement had been rather successful; they had hurled the iron benches and café chairs of the Paseo Castañeda in front of the horses, which had gone down in a clattering tangle—an excitement added to by the hurling of bricks by the workmen of the new A.B.C. newspaper building.

The Regina *tertulia* was quite agog over one stunt of the

students, the details of which were given out by secret student leaflets.

A most horrible homosexual jealousy crime had been committed in Barcelona. Bad odor had led to the discovery, in the Madrid express office, of a trunk shipped from Barcelona, containing a headless body cut into quarters. Evidently the head would not fit into the trunk, and there was much gruesome conjecture as to what the criminal had done with it.

The students of the university decided to assist the police. They lassoed a large bronze bust of King Alfonso in an *antesala* and rolled it under a big table with drapes, and there, underneath, set about sawing the head off his Majesty. When anyone came near, the boys on guard would begin to sing loudly so the sawing would not be heard. It must have taken the better part of a day to perform the decapitation. The head was smuggled out, crated up, and shipped off to the Barcelona police.

Nine years before, even in leftist circles, the King had been sacrosanct; it was as much as one's life was worth to criticize him even to a fulminating Red. But in nine years he had lost his magic. His open sanctioning of the unpopular Primo coup, which it is now known he himself helped engineer to suppress the scandals of the Morocco campaign and his own blunders therein, had destroyed public respect for him. Now, people talked openly of how he was dominated by Primo, of his mistresses and illegitimate children. His halo was gone completely. Even Conservative leaders had turned against him. When I suggested to them that this seemed paradoxical, they replied with heat that Alfonso had changed his position, not they. They wanted a limited monarchy, but one headed by a King who would not destroy the Constitution.

Alfonso had few friends when he finally fled, and few were sorry to see him go. A year and a half after the students symbolically decapitated his bronze bust, at seven-thirty on the eve-

ning of April 15, 1931, the Provisional Republican Government (a group of leaders without power, some in hiding, among whom were my friends of the Regina), headed by Azaña and Zamora, calmly walked into the Palace of the Interior.

There, the guards, guns in hand, hesitated, then respectfully stepped aside to let the little group of intrepid rebels pass. The act of those soldiers changed all Spanish history.

From the upper balconies, the Republican banner was flung out. The Republic was declared. A new government and a new epoch were born.

That there would eventually be a war-torn Spain, those dispirited Regina days of 1929, few doubted. But the Republic, miraculously enough, was established without the shedding of a drop of blood. It was established as an overwhelming moral force.

That Spain has since been plunged into terrible carnage is due to many things. For the Republic, peacefully though it had been established, became the battleground for conflicting factions. Azaña deserves great credit for steering the ship of state past so many reefs during those troubled years, but one must regretfully admit also that his failure to perceive that merely halfway reforms would get him nowhere has contributed to the subsequent disasters and the present disaster. Such reforms could neither satisfy the long-suppressed desires of the Spanish people for adequate justice nor disarm the enemies of the Republic. Azaña gradually destroyed public faith in his own measures, garnered in no great mass support and left the ancient enemies of the country, the clericals, militarists and feudal lords in a position to fight for their old unworthy privileges. One must sadly admit that the present bloody conflict is in good part due to Azaña's vacillations.

5

Among those who suffered much from Primo de Rivera's dictatorship was my friend Juan Andrade, head of the Cénit publishing house. He could depend on, without warning or having charges preferred against him, spending from a night, a week, a month in jail almost any time. One year his total residence behind bars totaled nine months.

But in the face of such molestations and of great financial difficulties, he continued to publish some of the outstanding books of Spain and the best translations of foreign books during that entire period.

It was with real sorrow the other day that I learned that he had become mixed up with the Trotsky revolt behind the lines of the Loyalist government, the ill-starred uprising of the P.O.U.M. As I write he is on trial for treason.

What bizarre fanaticism must have led him to this pass. What quirk is it in human beings that in an hour of crisis they either rise supreme to meet it or are twisted into some strange denial of their own self and their cause? I cannot for a moment doubt Andrade's complete sincerity, but certainly the Loyalist government represented Andrade's cause far more than did the Franco revolters whom he thus aided. For years Andrade had fought valiantly to free Spain from the incubus of corruption, militarism and feudal exploitation by Church and landlord, and then in the hour of trial, because of petty factionalism, he abetted the very enemies he had so long been fighting.

I was asked to sign a cabled petition for clemency for Andrade. I hope he is given clemency, but the cable was worded in denunciatory terms, and I was unable to sign it in such an hour. For me to have done so would have been a betrayal of some of my best friends who are today blind and mutilated or

who have given their lives in the struggle to stop the march of Fascism across Europe. Their blood cries out too strongly to me.

6

My Cuban friend, Pablo de la Torriente, is dead. A volunteer for the Loyalists in the present Spanish war, he was killed in battle on the Escorial front.

He fought not merely with rifle in hand but also with words. In the last communication I had from him, he told how every night he shouted the message of the Republic into the loud-speakers that carried his voice to the enemy trenches of Generalissimo Franco.

Don Pablo believed in the Spanish Loyalist cause with heart and soul. He had no love for tyrants or for rule by armed force. As a student in Cuba, where I knew him, he had opposed the despotic Machado régime. In the fighting his head had been gashed open by a mounted soldier's saber, and he had been dragged off to the Isla de Pinos penitentiary.

Later, he fled into exile in the United States. Penniless, he worked for tips in a Spanish cabaret on 110th Street. His pretty and loyal wife clerked in stores. In his free hours, he organized the Cubans against the new military dictatorship, under American aegis, of Fulgencio Batista. When the Spanish war broke out, he devoted all his energies to raising funds, supplies and volunteers for the Loyalist cause. One good day he disappeared. The next I heard he was in the trenches.

On the Escorial front, as elsewhere, the government militia-men set up powerful loud speakers and between battles, especially at night, they would attempt to persuade the Franco forces, the members of the Foreign Legion, and the Moors, to desert to the Loyalist ranks, to cease fighting their brothers.

Pablo de la Torriente was a good speaker. The enemy soldiers could tell by his accent that he was a Cuban and liked to listen

to him. They came to expect his nightly harangues as an agreeable business in the murky business of lying on their bellies in the mud and the grime and sweat of fighting. And soon after night fell and the mess kits had been scoured out with sand, they would shout, "Let the Cuban talk!"

Today he is dead.

He died that Mussolini and Hitler be stopped in their bloody careers. He died hoping that you and I might live in a better world.

INDEX

- A.B.C., 396
 Acadian deportations, 234-35
 Adams, Frances, 75
 Adriatic, 117
 Afghanistan, 45, 233
 Agrarians, 68-70. Cf. Peasants.
 Aguilar, Cándido, 59, 66
 Albornoz, Alvaro de, 378, 388, 396
 Alcalá de Henares, 389
 Alcalá Zamora, 398
 Alemán, Cristóbal, 102
 Alfonso XIII, 89, 93-95, 379, 389, 397, 398
 Alhambra, 79, 100
 Alps, Lombard, 171
 Altar, 11
 Alvarez, General, 21
 Alvarez del Vayo, 338, 377, 378, 388, 392, 393, 395, 396
 Amapala, 283, 294
 Amecameca, 192-203, 210-211
 American and Foreign Power Company, 281
 American capital, 281
 American Federation of Labor (A. F. of L.), 71
 American marines, 295-99, 303, 304
 American oil companies, 67, 68, 72, 250, 258, 265, 270-73
 Amtorg, 356
 Anarchists, 118, 395
 Ancona, 115
 Andrade, Juan, 399
 Angeles, General Felipe, 54
 Angelico, Fra, 87, 133
 Aragón, 82
 Aranjuez, 89, 91
 Arezzo, 156
 Argentina, 77, 346, 384
 Ariosto, 134
 Arikistain, Luis, 243, 377, 380, 392
 Arno River, 125, 131, 132, 133, 138, 140, 141, 146, 150
 Art, 86, 87, 89-91, 111-13, 131-33, 138-40, 180-84
 Asompa, San Francisco, 289
 Associated Press, 310, 326
 Ateneo de Madrid, 386, 391
 Atl, Dr., 243
 Atzacotzalco, 65, 197, 248
 Avanti, 157
 Avellaneda, Juan de Dios, 14, 24-25
 Avila, 82, 88
 Ayutla, 283, 291
 Azaña, President Manuel, 377, 379, 380, 388-92, 398
 Azuela, Mariano, 243
 Azorín, 380
 Baker, George Barr, 263
 Baldwin, Dorothy, 184, 230-32
 Baldwin, Margaret, 230-32
 Baldwin, Roger, 240
 Ballou, Harry, 378
 Ballou, Jennie, 378
 Bandits, 200-202
 Barcelona, 103, 390, 397
 Bargiello, Camilo, 382
 Baroja, Pio, 99, 377, 379, 380, 381
 Baroja, Ricardo, 383
 Barragán, General, 23
 Barrows, David P., 255
 Basques, 82, 99
 Batista, Fulgencio, 400
 Becker, Maurice, 184, 230-32, 245
 Benavente, Jacinto, 84, 99, 377, 380, 382, 390
 Ben Ezra, Rabbi, 91
 Berenguer, General, 93
 Berlanga, Manuel, 28, 67
 Bestiero, 396
 Best-Magaud, 243
 Bianchi, Michele, 150
 Birhuela, 389
 Black, Helen, 245
 Blair, Albert, 72-74
 Blair, Antonieta Rivas de, 73-75, 372
 Blasco Ibañez, Vicente, 99, 379-80
 Bluefields, 296
 Boccaccio, 134
 Bohan, Mrs. Delia, 72
 Bohemianism, 34-35
 Bologna, 115, 120, 122, 162
 Bonillas, Ignacio, 56, 57
 Borah, Senator, 264
 Borda Gardens, 216
 Borodin, 45-51, 339
 Borrow, George, 391
 Boston, 60, 233, 365
 Boston Open Forum, 365
 Boswell, 376
 Botticelli, 87, 132, 133

- Braun, Frau Hilda, 106-107
 Brazil, 305, 368
 Brenner, Anita, 241
 Bringas, Esperanza, 341
 British Oil Interests, 272-73
 Brochman, Harold, 16
 Browning, Robert, 125
 Bryan, 306, 307
 Bubonic plague, 76, 78
 Bucareli agreements, 194, 271, 300
 Buccaneers, 101
 Bull-fights, 79, 210, 257-58
 Buoninsegno, 138
 Burgos, 82, 91
 Butler, Nicholas Murray, 95, 254
 Byron, Lord, 140

 Cabrera, Luis, 66
 Cáceres, 97
 Caffery, Jefferson, 254
 Cajeme, 11-12
 Calderón, 99
 California, 10, 71, 82, 83, 86, 174, 225, 239
 Desert of, 10-11
 University of, 255
 Callendar, Harold, 372
 Calles, Plutarco Elias, 21, 57, 70, 178, 192, 193, 227, 229, 230, 238, 240, 268-71, 275, 300, 302, 312, 313, 318, 321, 326, 327, 338, 339, 350-52, 360
 Campeche, 48, 384
 Canada, 233-35, 304, 367
 French, 233-35
 Cananea, 41
 Canton, 43, 45
 Capitalism, 117-18, 278
 Caporetto, 126
 Cárdenas, Gutty, 243, 244
 Cárdenas, President Lázaro, 272, 280-81
 Carducci, Giosuè, 134
 Carlisle, 378, 381, 385
 Carnegie Foundation, 241, 361
 Carnegie Peace Foundation, 254-56
 Carranza, Venustiano, 16, 22, 23, 51, 52, 54, 56-68, 72, 106, 192, 243, 319
 Caribbean, 235, 335
 Carrillo, Benjamin, 49-53
 Carrillo, Felipe, 47-52, 71
 Carson, David, 28
 Casa del Labrador, 89
 Casanova, Pablo, 239
 Casas, Bartolomé de las, 312
 Cascine Vecchie di San Rossitore, 140-49
 Catherine of Aragón, 389
 Catholics, 118
 Catholic Church, 135, 267, 275-77, 311-12, 392, 393
 Catholic rebels, Mexico, 357
 Catt, Carrie Chapman, 250, 251, 254, 255
 Cavour, 113
 Cedillo, General Saturnino, 239-40
 Celaya, 190
 Cellini, Benvenuto, 131, 134
 Central America, 255, 262, 290-99, 301-304, 307, 357, 365
 Cervantes Saavedra, Miguel, 90, 91, 98, 99, 380, 386, 389
 Chamorro, Emilio, 295, 303, 349
 Chandler, Harry, 239
 Chapingo Agricultural School, 181
 Charles V, 79, 91
 Charlot, Jean, 241
 Chase, Stuart, 361
 Chase National Bank, 281, 356
 Chávez, Carlos, 243
 Chesterton, 391
 Chiang Kai-Shek, 52
 Chiapas, 48, 283, 285, 287
 Chichen Itzá, 241
 Chihuahua, 19
 Chihuahua City, 324, 325
 Chile, 250
 China, 43-45, 52, 304
 Chinese Northern Railway, 357
 Chipote, 294
 Church, Henry, 28
 Cid, 79-91, 99
 Científicos, 250
 Ciprani, Baroness, 121, 125-30
 Città Vecchia, 156
 Ciudad Juárez, 325
 Civatelli, 139
 Clarín, 380
 Clark, Reuben, 258
 Clive, Lord, 100
 Coello, Claudio, 87
 Colby, 250
 Coleridge, 376
 Columbia University, 95, 225, 261, 361, 363
 Columbus, 81
 Columbus (Ohio), 297
 Comayagua, 284
 Comintern, 50, 51, 340, 352
 Committee for Industrial Organization (C.I.O.), 42
 Communism, 113, 345
 Communist Party, 50, 51, 245, 340, 345, 348, 351
 Communists, 112, 114, 115, 118, 226, 267, 302, 345, 354
 Communist Third International. Cf. Comintern.
 Con-Con, 303
 Conesa, Maria, 20

- Conference on the Cause and Cure of War, Second, 250
 Conquistadores, 81, 112
 Constantine, Arthur, 326, 327, 330
 Coolidge, Calvin, 260, 263, 309, 370
 Córdoba, 76, 100, 176
 Corradini, 161
 Cortés, Hernán, 65, 79, 81, 99, 311
 Coruña, 78-81, 83, 103, 131
 Costa Rica, 296, 306, 307
 Covarrubias, Miguel, 287
 Covarrubias, Rosa, 288
 Cowdray, Lord, 288
 Coyoacán, 286
Creative Arts, 242
 Credi, Lorenzo di, 87, 132
 Cremona, 115, 171
 Cristeros, 355, 358
 Croce, Benedetto, 134, 161
 Croly, Herbert, 257, 259
 CROM. Cf. Mexican Regional Confederation of Labor.
 Cruz, General Roberto, 268
 Cuba, 77, 298, 310, 400
 Cuernavaca, 19, 216, 276, 311
 Cuiquepan, 289
 Culiacán, 12
Current History, 301
 D'Annunzio, 134, 135, 137, 159, 161, 382
 Dante, 125, 133, 148
 Darió, Rubén, 380, 382, 385
 Da Vinci, Leonardo, 111, 132, 134, 139
 Davis, Fred, 243, 276, 312
 Davis, Tom, 320-23
 Dawes, Charles, 55
 Dawes, Mrs., 251
 De la Huerta, Adolfo, 191, 192, 300
 De la O., General, 54
 De la Vega, 91
 De Leon, Daniel, 37, 38
 Dell, Floyd, 35
 Della Robbia, 133
 Del Sarto, Andrea, 87, 132
 Desierto de los Leones, 19
Diario de la Marina, 241
 Díaz, Adolfo, 295, 303
 Díaz, Felix, 58
 Díaz, Porfirio, 22, 47, 73, 250, 281-82, 318
 Díaz Soto y Gama, Antonio, 70
 Diéguez, General Mariel, 23, 67
 Díez Canedo, 377, 385, 390
 Dodge, Mabel, 361
 Doheny, 72, 250, 258
 Doherty, Mary, 243
 Domenichina, Juan José, 377
 Domingo, Marcelino, 378
 Donatello, 138
Don Quixote, 79, 90, 91, 99, 389
 Don Sturzo, 118
 Dos Passos, John, 245-49
 Dos Passos, Kate, 248
 Dostoievsky, 104
 Dubose, Clare, 326
 Dubose, Clarence, 323-24, 326
 Duque, 70
 Durango, 13, 19
 Duranty, Walter, 173, 319
 Durieux, Caroline, 241
 Dwyer, Mr. and Mrs., 359
 Eastman, Max, 35
 Eberhardt, Minister, 295
 Echevarria, Juan, 377, 378
 Electric Bond and Share Co., 281
 Elias, Arturo, 270
El Liberal, 378
 Ellis, Havelock, 84
El Machete, 276, 340
 El Paso, 29, 325
El Sol, 392
El Universal, 243
 England, 45, 48, 91, 163, 164, 175, 304, 343
 Erwin, Charles, 270
 Escobar, General, 366, 367
 Escorial, 88, 89, 389, 400
España, 377
 Espronceda, 99
 Estrada, Genaro, 352, 353
 Estrada, General, 192
Excelsior, 180, 321
 Extremadura, 97, 99, 380
 Extremeños, 99
 Fabela, Isidro, 243, 348-49
 Facta, Premier, 150, 152
 Fall, Senator, 72
 Fascism, 48, 107, 112-19, 120, 132, 150-58, 159-64, 170, 395
 Fascists, 112-17, 150-58, 159-64, 172
 Federated Press, 180
 Feland, General, 296-98
 Ferdinand, King, 91
 Fernández de Castro, José Antonio, 241
 Fitzmaurice, 99
 Florence, 115, 121-37
 Altrarno, 115
 Archaeological museum, 132
 Bautisterio, 131, 132
 Boboli, 125
 Bobolino, 125
 Cascine, 133, 138
 Chertosan monastery, 138
 Dante's house, 132
 Guicciardini Palace, 125
 Knight's Hospice, 125
 Loggia, 131, 132
 Palazzo Communale, 134

- Florence, *Continued*
 Piazza Duomo, 131, 133
 Pitti Palace, 125, 132
 Ponte Vecchio, 125, 132, 138
 Santa Croce, 120, 132
 Santa Maria Novella, 132, 133
 Spanish chapel, 132
 Tuscan ruins, 132
 Uffizi, 132
 Via d'Mori, 125
 Via Massaccio, 123
 Fonseca, Gulf of, 283, 292
 Foreign Policy Association, 297
 Fox, General, 54
 France, 163, 164, 171, 172
 France, Anatole, 132, 380
 Franco, General Ramón, 377, 395, 399
 Franco-Española Oil Co., 277
 Frank, Harry, 86
 Frank, Waldo, 245
 Freeman, Joe, 245
 Field Jurado, Juan, 193-96
 Fiesole, 138
 Firpo, 178
 Fromintern, 242
 Frontón, 212
 Gag, Wanda, 245
 Galdos, 99, 381
 Gale, 50
 Galicia (Spain), 381-82
 Galicians, 77
 Galileo, 139
 Gannett, Lewis, 224
 Gaona, 210
 Gauls, 116
 Geissler, Minister, 283, 300-302
 Gellert, Hugo, 245
 Generals, 20-23, 58, 312
 Genoa, 103
 Gentile, 134, 161
 Germany, 55, 116, 118, 303, 304, 336, 339, 340
 Gerard, Ambassador, 359
 Ghirlandaio, 87, 133
 Gibraltar, 392
 Gil Robles, 391
 Giordano, 89
Giornale di Roma, 157
 Giotto, 131, 133
 Godoy, 382
 Godwin, Mary, 140
 Goethe, 134, 376
 Gold, Mike, 35, 245
 Goldman, Emma, 261
 Goldschmid, Dr. Adolf, 361
 Goldsmith, 376
 Gombo, 138-49, 151
 Gómez, General Arnulfo, 366
 Gómez Carrillo, 383
 Gómez de la Serna, 377, 383, 386, 390
 Gómez-Serrano revolt, 366
 Gompers, Samuel, 71, 100-101, 270, 341
 González, Cholita, 177
 González, General Pablo, 23, 54, 56, 58, 65, 69-70
 González Blanco, 383
 Gorelik, Max, 241
 Gorgona, 146
 Goya, 87, 181
 Gozzolo, Benozzo, 112, 133, 140
 Graham, Martha, 361
 Granada, 100, 101
 Graves, General, 256
 Greco, El, 87, 89-91, 131
 Green, William, 341
 Greenwich Village, 35
 Greytown, 296
 Gruening, Ernest, 252, 264, 361, 362, 363
 Gumbert, Alex, 75, 315, 356
 Guadalajara, 67, 192, 242, 357, 358
 Guadalupe, 60-63, 211
 Guadalquivir River, 101
 Guadiana River, 97
 Guatemala, 48, 284-85, 291-92, 300-302
 Guatemala City, 283
 Guazzarini, Maria, 107
 Guerrero, 58
 Guggenheim interests, 250
 Gunther, John, 319
 Gupta, Hernamba, 44, 51
 Guzmán, Martín Luis, 375, 377, 391-92
 Haberman, Roberto, 58, 69, 71, 177, 269-70
 Haberman, Thorburg, 71
 Hand, Judge, 361
 Haiti, 46-53, 256, 309
 Harding, President, 370
 Hardwick, Harry, 37
Harper's Bazaar, 253
 Havana, 77-78, 309, 377
 Haykiss, Leon, 343, 346
 Hearst, William Randolph, 118, 264-65, 300, 320, 324
 Hefflin, Tom, 264
 Heltschmidt, Walter, 33-34, 85
 Hemingway, 126, 258
 Hedaye, 373
Henequén, 45, 47, 279, 339, 345
Herald Tribune, New York, 253
 Hercules, 91
 Hermosillo, 11
 Herrera, 102
 Herring, Hubert, 257, 362
 Higgins, Paul, 186
 Hill, General Benjamin, 70
 Hillquit, Morris, 228-30
 Hindus, 43, 51, 71

- Hitler, 112, 119, 401
Hojas, 378, 394
 Holmes, John Haynes, 365
 Honduras, 283, 291-94
 Hong Kong, 43
 Hoover, Herbert, 263, 316, 317, 370
 Hoyo, Dr. Luis, 377
 Huebsch, Benjamin, 169, 170, 172, 177
 Huerta, Victoriano, 58, 68, 70, 76
 Hughes, 310
 Hugo, Victor, 104
 Hull, Cordell, 305
 Huneker, 376
 Hunt, Leigh, 140

 Ibsen, 84, 380
Il Messaggero, 167
Il Popolo, 111, 162
 Imperialism, 163-64, 255-56, 282-315, 335
 Incas, 15
 Indians, 11-13, 211, 213-14, 328
 Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.), 38-42
 Inman, Dr. Samuel Guy, 361
 Institute of Current World Affairs, 279
 Intellectuals, 118, 226
 International Committee for Political Prisoners, 240
 International Telephone and Telegraph Company, 281, 394
 Intervention, 295-310
 Irving, Washington, 79, 100
 Isabella, Queen, 91
 Isla de Pinos penitentiary, 400
 Italy, 73, 103-73, 199, 303, 383
 Agriculture, 116-17
 Aristocrats, 120 ff.
 Blue Shirts, 156
 Factory seizures, 107
 Guardia Regia, 114, 115, 152, 157, 158
 Terrorism, 114
 Cf. Art, Communism, Fascism, Mussolini, etc.
 Ixtacihuatl, 198, 199, 210
 Ixtapalapa, 247

Jai-alai, 212
 Jalapa, 384
 Jalisco, 29, 32, 357, 358, 359
 James, Henry, 177
 James, William, 136-37
 Japan, 52, 304
 Earthquake in, 323-24
 Jerte River, 97
 Jewels, Tsarist, 43-53
 Jews, 27, 35, 45, 229-30, 236-37, 344, 363
 Jiménez D., Enrique, 243
 Jiménez y Orozco, Archbishop, 192

 Johnson, Colonel, 355
 Johnson, Jack, 25-26
 Johnson, Samuel, 377
 Juana, Queen, 91
 Jugo-Slavia, 163

 Kamerinsky brothers, 27-28
 Keats, 140
 Kellogg, Nervous Nellie, 250, 258-63, 274, 302, 353
 Kerensky, 306
 Kirchwey, Freda, 291, 294, 296
 Kluckhorn, Baron Szilard von, 206-223
 Kollontay, Madame, 341-43, 354
 Ku Klux Klan, 163, 180, 226, 320
 Kuomintang, 45, 52

 Labor, 193, 351. Cf. Strikes, Industrial Workers of the World, Mexican Regional Confederation of Labor, etc.
Lafayette, 75-78
 La Follette, Robert, Jr., 264
 Laguna Grande, 289
 Lamont, Thomas, 266, 314
 Larsen, Lieutenant, 295
La Nación (Buenos Aires), 377, 392, 393
 Landon, 317
 Land question, Italy, 115 ff.
 Mexico, 279-81
 Spain, 398
 Cf. Peasants, Morrow, Portes Gil, Calles, Ortiz Rubio, Cárdenas.
La Nueva Democracia, 361
La Pluma, 377, 390
 Laredo, Texas, 236
 Largo Caballero, 395
 Latin America, 73, 194, 230, 254, 255, 300, 306, 309, 310, 335. Cf. Mexico, Central America, Cuba, Haiti, etc.
 La Unión, Salvador, 283, 293, 294
 Lawrence, D. H., 186-89, 361
 Lawrence, Freda, 186
 League for Women's Peace and Freedom, 365
 League of Nations, 51
 Leghorn, 140
 Leighton, Fred, 180
 Lenin, 157, 338, 395
 León, Dr. Carlos, 292
 León, Luis, 261
 Leopardi, 134
 L'Epoca, 156
 Lerici, 140, 146
 Levanto, 171
 Lewis, John, 42
 Ligurian Sea, 140
 Lindbergh, 310, 319-37, 360

- Lindbergh, Senator, 335
 Lindbergh, Mrs., 334
 Lippi, Filippino, 116
 Lippi Fra, Lippo, 133
 Lisbon, 82, 96
 Lista, Alberto, 102
 Little Corn Islands, 296
 Litvinof, 354
 Livorno, 171
 Lloyd, John, 353, 355
 Logan Act, 263, 295, 297
 Lombardo Toledano, Vicente, 197
 London, 34, 343
 London disarmament conference, 313
 Long, Huey, 337
 Lope de Rueda, 102
 Lope de Vega, 99
 López, General Palomero, 321-22
 Lorca, 100
 Louvre, 372
 Lov, 306
 Lower California, Gulf of, 11
 Lucca, 139, 165
 Lydia, 127-28

 Machado, Gerardo, 309, 400
 Machiavelli, 125, 134
 Madero, Francisco, 70-74, 251, 252, 254
 Madrid, 81-95, 373-400
 Alcalá, Calle de, 374, 375
 Arenal, Calle de, 383
 Atocha, Calle de, 82
 Conde de Peñalver, 374, 392
 Conde de Romanones, Calle de, 94
 Crédit Lyonnaise, 382
 El Henar Café, 374
 Eslava Theatre, 84
 Grand Via, 373
 Levante, Café de, 383
 Lion d'Or Café, 374
 Madrid Café, 382
 Magdalena Café, 85
 Mayor, Calle de, 374
 Opera, 85-86
 Oro del Rhin, 83
 Palace of the Interior, 398
 Paseo Castañeda, 396
 Paseo del Prado, 374
 Piombo Café, 377
 Prado, 85
 Prostitution, 84-85
 Puerta del Sol, 85, 373
 Rastro, 83
 Regina Café, 373, 375 ff.
 Roma Theatre, 84
 Royal Palace, 93-94
 Tertulias, 373 ff.
 Theatres, 84
 Toledo, Calle de, 373
 Velásquez, Calle de, 82

 Magaña, Delia, 244, 321, 322
 Makar, Dr., 344
 Málaga, 82
 Malatesta, 115
 Malta, 163
 Maltrata, 176
 Managua, 256, 295, 349
 Manchukuo, 304
 Manchuria, 353
 Manrique, Aurelio, 237-40, 312, 322
 Marina, Italy, 146
 Marins, 358
 Markel, Lester, 367
 Marof, Tristán, 360
 Martínez Sierra, 382
 Marx, Karl, 36, 395
 Mascareñas, Alberto, 229
 Massachusetts, 233
 Matagalpa, 298
 "Maya," 204-205
 Mayas, 47, 181
 Language of, 361
 Maycote, General, 193
 Mazatlán, 31, 41
 Mazzini, 388
 Medici, 140
 Mediterranean, 103, 147, 163
 Mella, Julia Antonio, 242
 Mencken, 35, 136
 Mendizabal, Miguel, 266, 273, 360
 Mérida, 97-99
 Mérimée, Prosper, 391
 Mexican Folkways, 186
 Mexican Labor Party, 58, 197
Mexican Life, 240
 Mexican National Geographic Society,
 345
 Mexican Regional Confederation of
 Labor (CROM), 193, 338-42, 348,
 351
 Mexican Unitarian Trade Union Con-
 federation (CSUM), 351
 Mexico, 11-86, 169, 172-223, 228, 230,
 236-82, 285-87, 353, 378, 384
 Army, 23. Cf. Generals.
 Central America, 300 ff.
 Congress, 14, 24
 Education, 54
 Federal District, 54
 Finances, 277-79, 313. Cf. Morrow,
 Lamont, De la Huerta, Carranza,
 etc.
 Intervention, 45, 48-9. Cf. Morrow.
 Islas Marias prison, 280, 351
 National Library Department, 341
 National Munitions Works, 71
 Politicians, 105
 Pro-German attitude, 21
 Russia, 338-56
 Supreme Court, 270-71

Mexico, *Continued*

- Terrorism, 280, 351
- War Department, 18, 23, 58, 59, 72
- Cf. Catholic Church, Petroleum, Morrow, Revolution, Imperialism, Communism, etc.
- Mexico City, 9-10, 13-76, 177, 186 ff., 240, 308, 313, 341 ff.
- American Embassy, 323, 331, 332
- American High School, 16, 72-73
- Arbeu Theatre, 216
- Ayutamiento, Avenida de, 18, 28, 55
- Bachs, 216, 243
- Bolívar, Calle de, 25
- Broadway Café, 321
- Bucareli, Paseo de, 177, 241
- Buena Vista station, 59
- Cathedral, 60, 63
- Chapultepec Castle, 190, 193
- Chapultepec Heights, 74
- Chapultepec Park, 57, 191
- Colonia del Valle, 222
- Colonia Roma, 241, 267
- Colonia Station, 59
- Colonia Vallejo, 177, 178
- Cosmos Hotel, 320
- Country Club, 364
- Cuatemotzin, Calle de, 41
- Dolores, Calle de, 14, 31
- Foreign Relations Office, 352
- Geneva, Hotel, 341
- German Club, 15
- Globo, El, Café, 25, 26
- Gobernación, 177
- Grand Hotel, 177
- Heroes, Calle de, 74
- Humboldt, Calle de, 65
- Independence Monument, 53, 73
- Juárez, Avenida de, 58, 321, 323, 352
- Lady Baltimore, 368
- L'Escargot, 217
- Lirico Theater, 321
- Madero, Francisco, Avenida de, 25, 60, 216, 243, 248
- Monte Carlo, Hotel, 186
- National Palace, 18, 63, 241, 260, 348-49
- National Preparatory School, 54, 181
- National Theatre, 242
- Nuevo México, Calle de, 177
- Nuevo México, Hotel, 32
- Palace of Fine Arts, 182
- Plaza de Toros, 257
- Principal Café, 21
- Prostitution, 19-20
- Red Cross Hospital, 24
- Reforma, Paseo de, 53, 73
- Regis, Hotel, 195
- Rin, Calle del, 340
- Ritz, Hotel, 248

Mexico City, *Continued*

- Rosales, Calle de, 353
- Salón Azteca, 184
- San Angel Inn, 216, 341
- San Juan de Letrán, Calle de, 242, 322
- San Juan Flower Market, 221
- San Juan Market, 14
- Santa María, barrio de, 243
- Santiago Military Prison, 191
- Secretariat of Education, 180, 241
- Soviet Legation in, 338-56
- Tacuba, Calle de, 24
- Tacuba, Hotel, 15
- Tío Pepe's saloon, 322
- Tres Tranvías saloon, 319, 322
- Uruguay, Calle de, 186
- Mexico, Gulf of, 77
- Mexico, National University of, 197, 357
- Mexico, Valley of, 342
- Michael Angelo, 131-34, 376
- Michoacán, 330
- Milan, 105-15, 120, 152, 171
- Diana Kurssal Theatre, 114
- La Scala Opera House, 111
- Last Supper*, 111-12
- Piazza Venezia, 114
- Porta Venezia, 113
- Militarism, 20, 69, 83-84, 312
- Miliukof, 306
- Milpa Verde, 19
- Mino da Fiesole, 165-66
- Mixed Claims Commission (U. S.-Mexico), 193-96
- Modotti, Mercedes, 181, 242-43
- Modotti, Tina, 181, 242-43
- Molina Enriquez, 360
- Moncada, General, 303-304, 309
- Monna, 106-107
- Monroe, Dr., 361
- Monte Carlo, 120, 121, 123
- Montenegro, Roberto, 243
- Montes de Oca, 313, 314
- Montesinos, 360
- Moon, Parker, 250
- Moors, 79, 91, 100, 400
- Morelos, 276
- Morgan, House of, 266, 277, 279, 314, 315
- Morley, 361
- Morocco, 93, 121, 397
- Morones, Luis N., 58, 70, 71, 197, 243, 260, 261, 270, 338-41, 350-51
- Morrow, Anne, 336, 360
- Morrow, Dwight W., 197, 228, 243, 265-82, 308-18, 326-27, 330-31, 333, 335, 336, 338, 346, 347, 351, 353, 354, 356, 357, 363, 365, 393
- Morrow, Mrs. Dwight, 267-68
- Moscow, 51, 354

- Motul, 47
 Mooney, Tom, 227
 Munguia, Enrique, 243
 Munitions, 303, 304-307
 Munro, Dana, 256, 296
 Murgia, General Francisco, 58
 Murillo, 87, 101
 Murray, Robert Hammond, 251-52, 319
 Mussolini, Benito, 107, 112, 113, 117-19,
 132, 150, 157, 159-64, 401
 Mussolini, Carlo, 111, 160
 Mutilati, 107, 110, 115

 Naples, 150
 Napoleon, 79
Nation, The, 195, 224, 253, 259, 291,
 292-94, 361
 National Agrarian Party, 70
 National City Bank, 281
 National Revolutionary Party, 351
 Navarro, 85
 Nayarit, 281
 Nazis, 116
 Negrin, 393
 New Brunswick, 233
 New Jersey, 313, 315
New Masses, 35, 37, 245
 New Orleans, 47
New Republic, 257, 258, 259, 393
 New School of Social Research, 361
 News correspondents, 319-25, 336, 337,
 356
 New York, 75, 118, 174, 223-230
 Waldorf Astoria, 227
 Washington Irving High School,
 227-29
New Yorker, 35
 Nicaragua, 235, 256, 263, 291, 294-99,
 302-305, 307, 308-10, 357, 380
 Nicolson, Harold, 318
 Nitti, 156
 Nobel Prize, 84, 263, 377
 Noriega Hope, 321
 North Rustico, 233
 Norton, Henry Kittredge, 256
 Notre Dame, 72-75, 372
 Norway, 343
 Novo, Salvador, 243
 Nogales, 254
 Nuevo Laredo, 236-37
 Nutter, Charles, 353, 355
 Nye Senate Investigation, 305

 Oakes, Ochs, 301
 Obregón, Alvaro, 23, 52-53, 56-71, 177,
 190-96, 197, 268, 300, 312, 313, 322,
 350
 Oil. Cf. Petroleum.
 Olinalá, 289
 Olympic games of Central America, 301

 Orellana, President, 283
 Orizaba, 176
 Orozco, Carlos, 358
 Orozco, José Clemente, 181-84
 Ortega y Gasset, 377
 Ortiz Rubio, 279, 351-52
Osservatore Romano, 276
 Otomies, 211

 Pachuca, 61
 Palavicini, Felix, 243
 Paley, Martin, 16
 Panama, 304
 Pan-American Congress, 295, 309-10, 336
 Pan-American Society, 255
 Pan-Mexicanism, 302
 Papini, 134, 136-37, 161
 Paracho, 289
 Paraguay, 276, 378, 379
 Pareto, 134, 161
 Paris, 99, 372, 383
Partito Popolare, 118
 Pastora, La, 84
 Patzcuaro, 289
 Peasants,
 Cuba, 298
 Italy, 115
 Mexico, 193, 279-81, 313, 350-51
 Spain, 80-81
 Pelaez, General, 67
 Pérez Ayala, 377, 379, 390
 Pershing expedition, 21
 Persia, 45, 51
 Perú, 276
 Perugia, 156
 Perugina, 87, 132
 Petrarch, 134
 Petroleum, 67, 68, 72, 250, 258-65, 270-
 73, 277-78, 339
 Petkovsky, Minister, 338-41, 354
 Philadelphia, 365, 366
 Philadelphia Labor Forum, 365
 Philadelphia Women's University Club,
 365
 Phillips, Howard, 240, 244
 Pino Suárez, 251
 Pirandello, 134
 Pisa, 112, 115, 140, 165, 171
 Bautisterio, 139
 Borgo Largo, 141
 Campo Santo, 112, 139, 140
 Duomo, Piazza, 139, 141
 Ponte Mezzo, 141
 Porta Nuova, 141
 Pittsburgh, 365, 367
 Pizarro, 79, 81, 99
 Placenza, 96-97
 Popocatepetl, 198
 Port-au-Prince, 48
 Porter, Katherine Anne, 181, 362

- Portes Gil, 279, 327, 348-51, 354, 365
 Portugal, 383
 P.O.U.M., 395, 399
 Po Valley, 117
 Prado Museum. Cf. Madrid.
 Prato-in-Toscana, 115, 116, 138
Primitivi, 138
 Princeton University, 279
 Primo de Rivera, 373, 375, 379, 386,
 390, 394, 395-97, 399
 Prieto, Indalecio, 378, 394, 395
 Prince Edward Island, 233-35
 Pro, Padre, 269
 Prohibition (Mexico), 57
 Prometheus, 147
 Prostitution, 19-20, 84
 Proust, 88, 226
 Puebla, 63, 67, 193, 197
 Mountains, 66
 Puerto Barrios, 284
 Puerto Cabezas, 303
 Puerto Cortés, 284
 Puerto Limón, 296
 Puerto México, 76-78
 Puerto Rico, 361
 Puig Casauranc, 243, 261
 Puglia, 115
 Querobabi, 13
 Quetzaltenango, 284
 Quiché Indians, 283-84
 Quintana Roo, 48
 Quintanilla, Luis, 283
 Quiriguá, 284
 Rafael, 87
 Raleigh, 100
 Rapallo, 171
 Ravenna, 165
 Red Cross, 24, 61-62, 255
 Redfield, Robert, 361
 Reed, John, 35, 252
 Refugio, 178-79
 Renwick, W. W., 292-93
Revista de Revistas, 321
 Revolution, 18, 19, 22, 54-71, 184
 Ribera, 87
 Ricci, Henry, 41-42
 Río Grande, 31, 384
 Rios, Dr. Fernando de los, 357
 Rios, Francisco de los, 390
 Rivas, Señor, 73
 Rivera, Diego, 180-84, 241-42, 311-12,
 358
 Rivera, Lupe, 241-42, 358
 Rivera, Pico, 241-42
 Rogers, Will, 333-34
 Romagnoli, Antonio, 128-30
 Roman ruins,
 Fiesole, 138
 Mérida, 97
 Segovia, 88
 Rome, 91, 115, 125, 150-58, 165-71
 Altare della Patria, 153
 Barberini, Piazza, 154, 156
 Campodoglio, 152
 Catacombs, 166
 Croce Bianca, Via, 155
 Cuatro Capi, Bridge of, 167
 Due Macelli, Via, 152
 Europe, Caffé, 153
 Forum, 153, 155, 157, 166
 Janiculum, 153
 Library of American Studies, 161
 Ludovisi, 160
 March on Rome, 150-58
 Mons Sacer, 155
 Montecitorio, 154
 Nomentano, Via, 154-55
 Pamfili-Doria, Palazzo, 155, 157
 Pantheon, 157
 Piolta, Palazzo della, 151, 154
 Pincio, 169
 Porta Pia, 155
 Popolo, Piazza del, 153
 Quattro Fontane, Via, 156
 Quirinal, 153, 156, 157
 San Marcello, Church, 157
 Santa Maria Maggiore, Church, 156,
 165
 Savoy Hotel, 160
 Scala Spagnuola, 169
 Spada alla Regola, Palazzo, 154
 Trevi Fountain, 170
 Tritone, Via, 153, 156
 Umberto I, Corso, 152, 157
 Roosevelt, F. D., 254, 298, 305, 316,
 317, 336
 Ross, Professor Edward Alsworth, 357
 Roy, Rabindranath, 43-51
 Rublee, George, 266-67, 269, 276, 317
 Russia, 45, 48-50, 103, 117, 175, 226,
 306, 338 ff.
 Diplomacy in Mexico, 338-56
 Movies, 345-46
 Russian rifles, 300-307
 Sacasa, 292, 303, 304, 309
 Saenz, Moisés, 243
 Saint John, 233
 St. Lawrence, Gulf of, 233
 St. Louis, 41
 Salas, Angel, 243
 Salas, Monna, 243
 Salvador, 283, 292, 293
 Sánchez, General Guadalupe, 66, 192
 Sandino, A. C., 283-99, 300, 302, 303,
 304, 308, 309

- San José, Costa Rica, 302
 San Juan de Ulloa, 275
 San Juan River, 296
 San Lorenzo, Honduras, 283
 San Luis Potosí, 193, 237, 240
 San Pietro in Vincolo, 376
 San Rafael del Norte, 291, 293
 San Salvador, 292
 San Sebastián, 373
 Santa Ana, Salvador, 283
 Santander, 79
 Santa Anita, 185
 San Antonio, Texas, 70
 Santa Lucrecia, 76
 Santa Maria Maggiore, Church, 156,
 165
 Santa Rosa, Mexico, 285
 Savonarola, 112, 131, 133, 135
 Savoy, House of, 140, 148, 155
 Saylor, Lawrence, 15, 30
 Segovia, 88, 303, 304
 Seine, 99, 116
 Seldes, George, 264, 361
 Sellers, Admiral, 295
 Serrati, 113
 Sevilla, 85, 96, 100-102, 379
 Shaw, Bernard, 84, 337, 338
 Shean, Vincent, 319
 Sheffield, James R., 260-63, 274
 Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 140-48, 171
 Shoener, Signora, 123-25
 Strong, Anna Louise, 361, 362
 Siberia, 255
 Siena, 115, 138, 165, 171
 Silicoayapan, 289
 Silva Herzog, 360
 Simonson, Lee, 242
 Simpson, Dr. Eyler N., 279
 Sims, Larry, 37-41
 Sinaloa, 12
 Siquieros, David, 276
 Socialist Labor Party, 37, 45
 Socialist Party,
 Italy, 113, 115
 Mexico, 50
 Spain, 394, 395, 396
 Socialists, Italy, 159, 162
 Solana, 377
 Solís, Agustín, 25
 Sonora, 10-12, 17, 57, 192
 Desert of, 17
 Sorel, 159, 161, 162
 South America, 77, 235, 236, 365
 Southern Pacific Railway (Mexico), 281
 Soviet Union. Cf. Russia.
 Spain, 73, 77, 78-102, 103, 165, 303-305,
 340, 346, 361, 373-401
 Army, 83-84, 93
 Foreign Legion, 400
 Guardias Civiles, 80, 92
 Spain, *Continued*
 Loyalist, 352, 399-401
 Peasants, 80-81
 Republic, 398-401
 Terrorism, 93
 Women, 80-81
 Cf. Franco, Azaña, Alvarez del
 Vayo, Largo Caballero, Prieto,
 Moors, etc.
 Spengler, 209
 Spezia, 171
 Gulf of, 140
 Stalin, 345
 Standard Fruit Company, 281
 Standard Oil of California, 10, 281
 Steffens, Lincoln, 22
 Stimson, 304, 309, 353-54
 Stirner, Max, 157
 Strikes, 54
 Boston, 60
 Italy, 120
 Mexico City, 54-55, 60
 Mine (Mexico), 359
 Railways of Mexico, 340
 Stevedore (Havana), 78
 Strobach, William, 358
 Suchiate River, 283
 Sulla, 157
 Switzerland, 46, 106, 124, 163

 Tabasco, 48
 Tacca, Pietro, 116
 Tacuba, 65, 247, 248
 Tacubaya, 65, 68
 Tagus River, 91
 Tamaulipas, 349
 Tamazula River, 12, 18
 Tampico, 67, 193, 237, 276
 Tannenbaum, Frank, 261-63
 Tapatías, 356
 Tapia, 12
 Tasso, 134
 Taxco, 347
 Tchitcherin, 339, 354
 Teapot Dome, 72, 250, 258
 Tehuantepec, 287-89
 Indians, 211
 Isthmus of, 76
 Tegucigalpa, 283, 291-94
 Tejada, Colonel Adalberto, 360
 Tellez, Ambassador, 227-28, 302
 Tenayuca, 247
 Teotihuacán, 176, 209
 Teotitlán del Valle, 289
 Tepehuane, 13, 19
 Indians, 12
 Tepoztlán, 361
 Terni Ammunition Works, 154
 Teté, 185

- Thomas, Norman, 228-30
 Tiber River, 151, 154, 167
 Times, New York, 273, 331, 333, 348,
 367, 368, 372
 Tintoretto, 87, 89
 Tioga, Pa., 230-32
 Tipitapa agreements, 304, 309
 Titian, 87, 89
 Tlapam road, 70, 341
 Tlaquepaque, 359
 Tokyo, 324
 Toledo, 89-93, 100, 131
 Toluca, 204, 329, 330
 Toor, Frances, 186, 240-42
 Torriente, Pablo de la, 400-401
 Toscanini, 337
 Trelawney, Edward John, 140
 Teviño, General, 63
 Tribune, Chicago, 16, 264, 361
 Trieste, 115, 162
 Trotsky, 45, 49, 51, 157, 338, 399
 Trotskyites, 118, 226, 395
 Truskunov, Attaché, 345-46
 Tunis, 163
 Turati, 113
 Turin, 171
 Tuscany, 117, 138, 152, 165
 Tuxpán, 383

 Uccello, 181
 Ukraine, 344
Umanità Nuova, La, 115
 Unamuno, 373, 378, 380-81, 390, 394
 United Fruit Co., 281, 284
 United Press, 326
 United States, 45-48, 163, 164, 189,
 224-35
 Consul of, Mexico City, 75-76
 Depression, 175-76
 Mexico and, 193-96
 Navy Department, 305
 State Department, 197, 250, 254, 275,
 296, 300-307, 309, 354, 359, 363,
 364
 War Department, 305, 335
Universal, El, 360
 Urbalejo, General, 23
 Uruguay, 339

 Valbuena, 326-31
 Valdapeñas, 85
 Valencia, 390
 Valera, 99
 Valle, Heliodoro, 243
 Valle-Inclán, Ramón, 99, 375-87, 388,
 390, 392

 Van Loon, 310
 Vasari, 132, 133, 134
 Vasconcelos, 186, 192, 193, 361
 Veblen, 285
 Velásquez, 87, 89, 101
 Verga, Giovanni, 134
 Veronese, Paolo, 89
 Vera Cruz, 67, 76, 78, 174, 176, 275,
 355, 360
 Occupation of, 21, 59, 66
 Vespuccini, 120
 Victor Emanuel II, 140, 152-53, 155,
 157, 163
 Viking Press, 169
 Villa, Francisco (Pancho), 19, 54, 68,
 190, 192, 325
 Villard, Oswald Garrison, 291
 Villaseñor, Edward, 360
 Villistas, 13, 19
 Villon, 35
 Visigoths, 79

 Wakefield, Blanche, 32, 34, 85
 Wakefield, George, 31-34, 44
 Wall Street, 316
 Warren, Ambassador, 194, 222
 Washington, 228, 250, 302
 Weddel, Mr., 362-65
 Welles, Sumner, 254
 Wellington, 79, 100
 Wenger, Mary, 244
 Weston, Edward, 181, 242-43
 Wheatfield riots, 39
 Wilson, Ambassador Henry Lane, 250-55
 Wilson, President Woodrow, 53, 370
 Wood, Clement, 323
World, New York, 252, 327
 World War, 113, 117, 126

 Xochimilco, 178, 210, 216

 Yucatán, 47, 48, 71, 196, 241, 361
 Yajoa, Lake, 284
 Yaqui Indians, 11, 58, 66, 68, 313
 Yaqui River, 11, 57

Zafra, 77
 Zamora, Francisco, 360
 Zapata, Emiliano, 19, 23, 70
 Zapopan, 359
 Zapotecs, 288
 Zapatistas, 68
 Zepeda, Dr., 292, 297
 Zola, 380
 Zuloaga, 88
 Zurbarán, 87

